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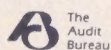
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Straight talk on shopping for a home theater. System pictured features a rear-projection TV by Pioneer, Thiel speakers, a Sony VCR, a Pro-Scan laserdisc player, Marantz THX amplifiers and a RoomTunes Clamp Rack. Photograph by Vittorio Sartor

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NEW TECH

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Frox has stirred excitement throughout the consumer electronics industry because of its advanced audio/video processing and its powerful, yet intuitive user interface. What's more, the FroxSound system has also been engineered for the purest signal and effects and can accommodate any future audio engineering developments through software.

According to Gareth Loy, Senior Audio Software Engineer, the 24 bit digital audio system accepts up to eight digital inputs, features 16 digital outputs, offers true digital signal processing for sound effects and passes the audio signal between components via fiber optic connections. The end result is a digital audio system that produces audio signals at their optimum purity.

It also has four analog inputs and outputs.

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Signal processing offers digital tone controls, a digital graphic equalizer, digital Dolby Pro Logic, and an innovative Sonic Playground that recreates a variety of room environments.

FroxSound has been built using the Motorola 56001 Digital Signal Processor, which can be reprogrammed at a moment's notice to integrate any new digital audio development. Additional audio processing can be obtained by purchasing additional signal processors.

PARA is an association of specialty audio and video retailers. To locate a PARA dealer near you, call:

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CHANNEL ONE

A theater of your own

Do you have a theater in your home? What room is it in? How did you buy the components—individually or as a system? Where did you buy it? Did you use the services of a professional installer or assemble the system yourself? If you don't currently enjoy a home theater, are you considering one? If so, how do you define home theater and where do you plan to shop for it?

If I sound like a clipboard-toting, mall-roving researcher, it's because home theater is one of the hottest topics in the consumer electronics business this year. Indeed you may have already been surveyed, since many companies are asking these very questions in an effort to define the concept and stake out positions in the market.

Reinforced by a recent survey from the Electronic Industries Association which shows that two-thirds of consumers would rather watch movies at home than in theaters, suppliers of audio and video equipment are developing dramatic new home theater systems designed to exploit their particular histories and technological specialties.

For instance, JBL, one of the earliest suppliers of loudspeakers for the movie industry and a leading name in commercial sound systems, is making its home theater statement with Synthesis One, a system that features a double-barrelled sound system that can be switched from Cinema to Music mode, for optimum listening pleasure from these two different types of entertainment experiences. Meanwhile, a new company named Frox is offering a complete home theater system, for \$10,000 to \$30,000 or more, that emphasizes the advantages 21st-century digital technology can bring to streamline the use of home entertainment equipment and programming.

Companies like RCA that have strong franchises in video are naturally developing their systems around the monitor as the centerpiece of a total home theater experience, while still others look to translate a strong consumer brand awareness in hi-fi products into a leadership position. But regardless of the starting point, or whether they are selling individual components or complete systems, the companies involved are all pursuing the same goal—to re-create the theater experience in your home.

From your calls and letters to us, we know that many of you already have a home theater system. You'll appreciate the process that is outlined in this month's cover story, "How to Buy a Home Theater," and will be able to compare it with your own experiences. For those who are about to embark on such a project, the article will give you a leg up in your decision-making process.

James M. Barry
Editor

HOW TO GET YOUR FOOTAGE IN THE DOOR

ENTER THE 8th ANNUAL VISIONS OF U.S. HOME VIDEO CONTEST

Here's your opportunity to create an original video production and have your work judged by video professionals—with the chance to win valuable Sony prizes.

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THE EIGHTH ANNUAL VISIONS OF U.S. VIDEO CONTEST

The Visions of U.S. Video Contest is sponsored by Sony Corporation of America and administered by The American Film Institute.

FEEDBACK

The terms of war

While I am a huge fan of your "Eyes-On" challenges, I can't help but question the method of testing employed in "Laser War Games" (Feb. '92). The first problem is that you ran all the signals through a single monitor, preventing a simultaneous side-by-side comparison of pictures. More disturbing is that you used only one disc. No single source is likely to bring out all the subtle qualities of the machines. *Silverado* is a great disc, but sources with more varied qualities would seem to be called for. What is surprising is that you did use varied sources for the "Clash of the Titans" rear-screen projection "Eyes-On" in last September's issue.

Scott Rohm
Trabuco Hills, California

Editor's reply: Matching five monitors, even of the same model, seemed unreasonable because variations among the monitors would have affected picture-quality judgments. We believe the variety of scenes in Silverado was sufficient for this exercise—and, having since used the players outside the boundaries of the shootout with other sources, our perceptions have proven consistent with the "Eyes-On" results.

Projection selection

Just read "Formula-1 Video," your March feature on front projectors, and thought I'd share my recent experience. Before investing \$1,400 in new tubes for my 5-year-old Kloss projector, I went to the library and listed the phone numbers of all the Los Angeles and Orange County dealers who mentioned projection TV sets in their Yellow Pages ads. After two days and dozens of calls, I came up with one Sharp LCD projector that could be demonstrated and one Mitsubishi that couldn't. I finally bought a Sony VPH-1000Q (without a demo) from a supplier to the film industry. Luckily, I'm satisfied. Considering the enormous geographical area (and the concentration of wealth) that I covered, I can only assume the projection TV industry is going nowhere fast.

Phil Hughes
Long Beach, California



11th Deck: Sony's SL-HF1000 SuperBeta VCR was an early stalwart editing deck for consumers.

Overlooked classic

In "10 Decks That Shook the World," your March feature on classic VCRs, you unforgivably omitted THE classic VCR, Sony's SL-HF1000 SuperBeta model. It introduced videophiles to true editing with such features as flying erase heads, a built-in edit controller, a jog/shuttle dial and a title generator. Also it records in the impeccable B1-SHB mode, which produces a better overall picture than S-VHS.

Greg Kinnach
Parma, Ohio

Editor's reply: The jog/shuttle dial was introduced on Sony's SL-HF900 SuperBeta VCR. However, the SL-HF1000's flying erase heads and additional editing features made the dial more useful.

Blackout anxiety

Why do your "Videotests" of new VCRs invariably ignore timeshifting, the only special thing that thousands do with their VCRs. I have a good VCR which I bought solely for one feature, a long backup time should my power supply fail. It's vital to us timeshifters, and should be included in all VCR reviews.

Charlie Schibener
Nashua, New Hampshire

Editor's reply: Beginning with this issue, when backup power time is available, we will include it in our "Videotests" of VCRs.

For the record

Yamaha manufactures its own laserdisc players. In "Laser War Games," (Feb. '92) we incorrectly reported that Yamaha does not.

Video Magazine welcomes your comments. Address correspondence to Feedback, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001.

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BRENT BUTTERWORTH

LATE NEWS

The latest on HDTV, Pro-Logic's successor and Minolta's focus fuss.

While Americans followed this winter's quest for Olympic gold on CBS and TNT, the French had a wider view of the ceremonies and events. And it wasn't just those who were fortunate enough to attend the 16th Winter Olympic Games in person who enjoyed an expanded picture of the competition. In 25 locations throughout France and a like number elsewhere in Europe, Thomson Consumer Electronics broadcast widescreen HDTV accounts of the games. For Thomson, this was an opportunity to replicate its home turf success in 1968 when the company introduced color TV in France during the Grenoble games. • Dolby Laboratories is creating a successor to Pro-Logic, the surround-sound standard that gave birth to home theater. Dubbed AC-3, the new standard will be a consumer version of the company's SR-D digital theater sound format. Intended for laserdiscs and CDs, AC-3 will include discrete digital tracks for three front speakers, two surround speakers and a subwoofer. This differs

from Pro-Logic, which combines left, right, center and rear signals in two analog tracks. Expect to see the first products equipped with AC-3 in about 18 months. • Minolta's new double-CCD Master Pro 8-919 Hi8 camcorder is the product of an unusual joint development program. While Minolta focused on the camera section, Hitachi developed the recorder. But Hitachi has no plans to introduce its own U.S. model. Minolta, meanwhile, was careful not to debut its camcorder before April. An earlier date risked entangling the model in a patent suit by Honeywell against portions of the autofocus system, which is the same one Minolta uses in its Maxxum 35mm SLR cameras. According to James de Merlier, a Minolta marketing chief, the relevant patent ran out on April 1. • It didn't take Sony long to elbow its way into the top echelon of companies marketing VHS VCRs. Just three years after the company bit the bullet and entered the one-time archival VHS camp, the company reports it's the number-one brand in VHS hi-fi unit sales and in the top five of all VCRs sold. • When's HDTV going to be on the market and what will be the price? No one really knows yet, but Zenith R&D Vice President Wayne Luplow estimates that, "For any given screen size, the extra cost increment of our HDTV system will be on the order of \$1,000, as compared to \$30,000 in Japan." The FCC is scheduled to an-

nounce its HDTV standard in early 1993. • Sony's coming entry into mobile video should jump-start the dormant field. The company recently showed prototypes of three car video monitors, an in-dash 8mm VCR and a VHS hi-fi deck intended for installation in a van or trunk. • If you've been wondering why there seem to be so many news re-



Going for the Gold: To promote advanced television in Europe, Thomson broadcast several Winter Olympic events in HDTV.

ports lately of consumer electronics retailers either going out of business or seeking some form of bankruptcy protection, one reason is surely an overpopulation of dealers. While the general population increased by 10 percent during the 1980s, according to statistics presented by JBL during a home theater demonstration this spring, the consumer electronics retail establishment grew by 75 percent to sell tens of millions of VCRs, TVs and other new products. ■



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GAZETTE

Jodie Foster comes of age

Sitting and speaking with Jodie Foster, director-star of *Little Man Tate* (Orion), you get the feeling she takes for granted being the smartest person in a room. And she's usually right: Foster earned a literature degree, with honors, at Yale, and was valedictorian at the Lycee Francais prep school in Los Angeles—where from age 9 her classes were conducted in French, one of the languages in which she's now fluent.

Thus it came as no surprise when Foster—a working actress since age 3—chose for her movie directorial debut a drama about a child prodigy. *Little Man Tate*, starring herself, Dianne Wiest and Harry Connick Jr., tells the fictional story of a 7-year-old genius, Fred Tate, played by newcomer Adam Hann-Byrd. It's stretching things to say Foster's own life mirrors Fred's—a kid with a shocking genius at painting, music and math who tries desperately to fit in with his peers—but there are similarities: The single mother. A long-gone, barely referred-to father. And the early mastery of language—Foster reportedly was speaking full sentences before age 2, and handling cold scripts at 5.

"I don't know," Foster ponders with uncharacteristic uncertainty. "I wasn't a genius at math and all that other stuff. And I was not at all that personality; I was not quiet or passive. I was an actor kid, so I was uninhibited and out there and danced on tables."

Foster's first directing job was a short titled "Hands of Time," for a BBC documen-

tary, *Americans*; she also wrote the script. That led to a chance to direct Tate for Orion Pictures, which has traditionally given first-time directors a shot—witness Kevin Costner's *Dances With Wolves*. Now, with an Oscar for her performance in *The Accused*, a nomination for *The Silence of the Lambs* and her feature directing debut, Foster realizes "the next step is crucial for me. After *The Accused* and *Silence*, I'm more scrutinized. And if my name is on the marquee now, any kind of failure is a bigger issue than if I wasn't."

All of which are good reasons to be picky about future projects. "A lot of

people have to work all the time, so they'll do two or three films a year, whatever comes along, and they just disregard the things that aren't right about it," Foster says. "I'm not a hack—I just don't know how to work that much. I don't have any ideas left at the end of a movie. And it's more fun this way," she says. "If you've got to spend three or four months on something, it better be something you enjoy."

—Frank Lovece

Todd Haynes picks his Poison

"I did a lot of traveling to show this film, and I was almost disappointed that there were never any picketers or protesters," says Todd Haynes, the writer-director of *Poison* (Fox Lorber). And though he never thought that this \$250,000 experimental film would be seen by more than a handful of people, Haynes has been "very happy to find audiences are much more receptive to complex, innovatively structured films than I'd expected."

It's not that the genial, boyish-looking Haynes wants to offend anybody—far from it. But he owes the unexpected success of his film in large part to publicity generated by Rev. Donald Wildmon, the Mississippi fundamentalist who has led protests against *thirtysomething*, *L.A. Law*, the TV movie *Roe vs. Wade* and even a *Mighty Mouse* cartoon for offending his definition of "family values."

After *Poison* won the Grand Prize award at the Sundance Film Festival, Wildmon condemned its "explicit porno scenes of homosexuals involved in anal sex," a charge he might have realized was untrue had he bothered to see the film first. (He later admitted he had not.) Although one of its three interlocking segments does deal with



Brain Trust:

Jodie Foster and Adam Hann-Byrd in *Little Man Tate*, Foster's first feature as director.

homosexual obsession, it is suggestive rather than explicit, with less nudity than many PG-rated films.

As entertaining as it is provocative, *Poison*'s three stories differ broadly in style and approach, but are linked by characters who are outsiders — "poison" to society. "Hero" takes a tabloid TV approach to the story of a 7-year-old boy who killed his father and then flew away out the window of his suburban home. "Horror," in which an innocent research scientist is transformed into a hideous "leper sex killer," parodies '50s horror movies. "Homo," the most naturalistic of the segments, is a Jean Genet tale of sexual obsession in a French prison.

Director Haynes wanted to present characters who are not to blame for their situations. In this sense, their situations become a metaphor for AIDS.



Far From the Mainstream: Controversy has brought an unusually large audience to *Poison*.

"There's a lot of self-indictment and self-blame in the gay community," Haynes observes, "a tendency to go back to the moment when you made the 'fatal error' and linger on it. I feel that that's being unfair to yourself and your experiences."

"But I didn't mean it to speak only to a gay community. For instance, I've heard from women all over the world who've told me how erotic the film is to them. Because there's no woman depicted in the [prison seduction] scene, it takes a sort of play-acting where you enter into the mentality of the male character. And that's what gay people have always done when viewing Hollywood films, to play-act as they watch films with heterosexual roles and get pleasure and excitement out of them."

—M. Faust



Down to Earth: Michelle Pfeiffer (above with Al Pacino) plays a lonely waitress in *Frankie & Johnny*.

Frankie and Johnny and Michelle

When last fall's theatrical release of *Frankie & Johnny* (Paramount) failed to score a major hit with the moviegoing public despite its A-list leads, Al Pacino and Michelle Pfeiffer, some in the movie business saw this as proof that its older "demographic" no longer buys movie tickets. This relatively small drama about loneliness and fear of attachment seemed not to be what moviegoers, the majority of whom are simply too young to identify with the characters, crave. Meanwhile the film was attacked from the other side for "Hollywoodizing" Terrence McNally's depressing play. Critics argued that the uncommonly beautiful Michelle Pfeiffer could never play the quite common character of Frankie created on stage by Kathy Bates. This camp also took issue with some of the comic touches and additional characters found in the Garry Marshall-directed film.

Pfeiffer objects to the idea that beau-

tiful or successful people cannot understand the pain and torment of loneliness. She identifies with Frankie a great deal, and even feels that her status as a movie star gives her some special insight into Frankie's feelings of isolation and her distrust of people. She recounts the story of her deathbed visit to a friend dying of AIDS: "They wheeled him in on a gurney and suddenly the ambulance driver turned to me and said, 'May I have your autograph?'"

Director Marshall says he was somewhat surprised by the controversy caused by Pfeiffer's casting. "Many people could play the woman," he says, "but to get what Terrence [McNally] really conceived for Frankie — well, Michelle is sexy, and I think Frankie is sexy too." Pfeiffer adds that her character, even in the play, was never described as homely but as "someone who could be very attractive if she just put some work into it." Appearances aside, Pfeiffer does evoke her character's emotional state in a very convincing manner. With any luck, *Frankie & Johnny*'s demographic will have an opportunity to find this out when it hits video store shelves April 29.

—Jon Silberg

Video Flashes

The Ratings Game. LIVE Home Video has become the first major label to add explanations of "R" ratings to cassette boxes. The explanations will be based on information provided by the MPAA, which rates feature films for theatrical release. Look for listings on violence, nudity and profanity on upcoming releases *Obsessive Love*, *Incident at Oglala*, *Prom Night IV* and *Fear*.

Lotto for Video. Ohio, Idaho, Delaware and Washington state have added movies on videocassette to their lottery games as "second chance" consolation prizes. More than 120,000 videos have been claimed in Ohio alone, where lottery players can choose among 121 different titles. Ohio's most popular prizes? *Total Recall*, *Dirty Dancing* and *Great Moments in Ohio Sports*.



This Hand-Cranked silent film camera, the 1903 H. Ernemann developed in Dresden, Germany, was one of the earliest successful motion picture cameras.



The Anamorphic Lens achieved the first large-format screen image. Originally developed in the late 1920's, it helped entice thousands of people back into the theaters during a sagging film economy three decades later.

Every so often the technology of movie

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speed, and take a guess at how to set the white balance. Or, using the new HS-CX7u, you can simply select the "skier" icon. And six separate functions will be automatically adjusted to shoot in the snow.

Or maybe you're shooting indoors at your neighbors' 60's Retro party. No problem. Just select the "party" icon. And the camera programs itself to handle the lighting conditions you find at a party.

There are six icons in all, which

will cover just about any shooting situation you might encounter.

The HS-CX7u also comes equipped with our Stable Cam™ feature. This sophisticated image stabilization system automatically compensates for any shakiness in your hands while shooting. Which means your pictures won't come out looking like you shot an earthquake. Unless, of course, you shot an earthquake.

What's more, the HS-CX7u



The Arriflex Camera, like the 1950's 35-2C pictured here, was the first camera to use a "spinning mirror reflex shutter," making it possible for the camera operator to see through the camera while filming.



The "skier" icon represents the brightness event setting, one of six single-touch automatic settings, on the new Mitsubishi HS-CX7u Camcorder.

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was designed with a lightweight inner lens focusing system. So it uses less battery power, while focusing faster than heavier external lens systems. In fact, the whole camera weighs a mere 1.4 pounds.

Our "Quick Recording" feature allows you to go from "stop" to "play" in less than one-third of a second,



so you're guaranteed not to miss any of the action. A welcome benefit when your daughter picks one exact instant to take her very first steps on earth.

And to make sure you catch all those editorial comments your Uncle Fred is so fond of making, our Hi-Fi recording and reproduction

capabilities allow you to pick up high-quality sound from any direction.

Now that you know the HS-CX7u is one of the most sophisticated pieces of movie making equipment in the world, you might want to head over to your nearest Mitsubishi dealer and take a look.

After all, something this huge doesn't come along very often.

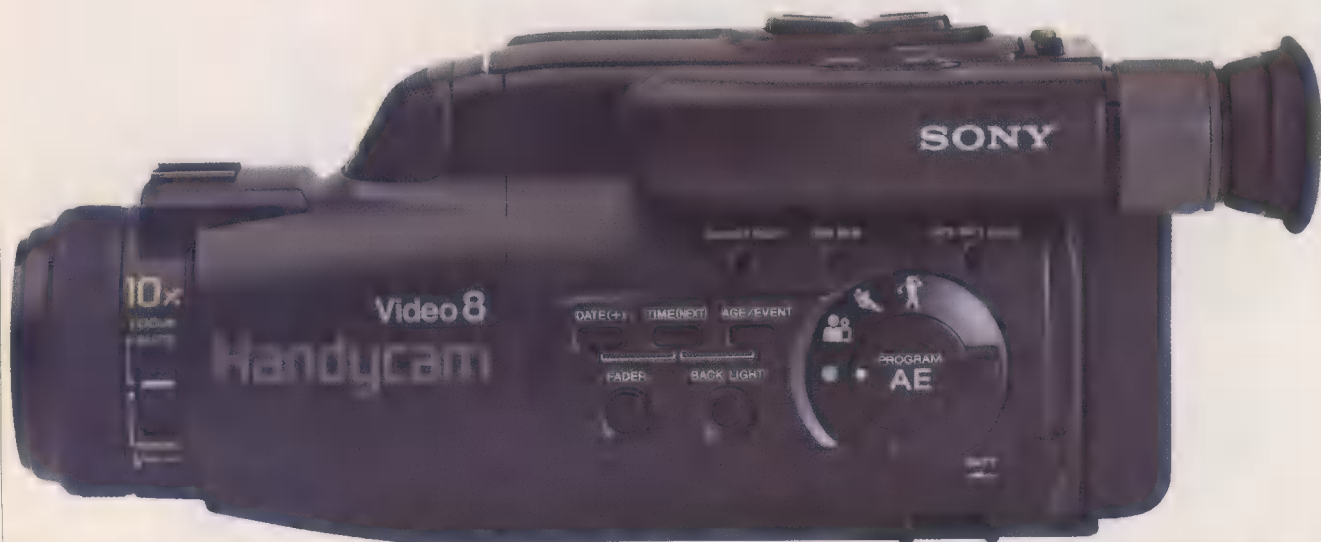


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VIDEOTESTS



Simple Sony: The CCD-FX410 offers exposure modes for portrait, sports and high-speed shutter, eliminating the need for manual adjustment of iris and shutter.

VIDEOTEST 633

SONY 8mm camcorder

ing ease. The differences appear in the number of manual controls.

Sony markets three lines of 8mm camcorders: the F series for basic family use, the V series for video enthusiasts who want all the bells and whistles, and the TR series of subcompacts. All have full automatic modes for point-and-shoot operating ease. The differences appear in the number of manual controls.

The new CCD-FX410 eschews manual control of exposure and shutter speed, substituting three specialized auto exposure modes. These modes, accessed with a large dial, let even total technophobes achieve optimum picture quality in most conditions. The portrait mode opens the iris as far as possible and controls exposure with shutter speeds up to 1/1,850-second, limiting depth of field to soften the focus on the background. The sports mode uses a moderately high shutter speed (up to 1/500-second) for low blurring in slow and still playback, and a high-speed shutter mode (1/4,000-second) for even less blur and very crisp

HIGHLIGHTS

With its new family-oriented CCD-FX410, Sony may have created its easiest-to-use camcorder. Instead of

manual shutter and iris controls, it offers auto exposure (AE) modes for portrait, sports and high-speed shutter. It produces a very good picture and good to very good audio, with excellent ease of operation. At \$1,100, the FX410 earns our recommendation.



Sony CCD-FX410 8mm Camcorder

Price: \$1,100

Weight & Size (h/w/d): 1.8 lbs. without battery or tape; 4-1/4 x 4-5/8 x 10-5/8 inches

Tape Format & Speeds: 8mm; SP, LP (play only)

Video Heads: 2

Image Sensor: 1/3-inch CCD

Lens: f/1.6, 10x (6.1-61mm) two-speed power zoom.

Filter Diameter: 37mm

Minimum Focusing Distance: 1/2 inch

Autofocus: TTL inner fo-

cus. switchable to powered manual

Minimum Illumination: 3.6 lux for 50 IRE

Iris: auto with 3 AE modes plus BLC

Fade: trigger-operated, audio/video to black

Shutter Speeds (sec.): normal—1/60, AE portrait—1/60-1/1,850 automatic; AE sports—1/60-1/500 automatic, AE high-speed shutter mode—1/4,000

White Balance: full auto

Viewfinder: electronic with large sports-type adjustable magnifier, LED recording indicator which

blinks for low battery or low tape, and onscreen indicators for backlight, manual focus mode, LP play, tape transport mode, AE mode, counter, tape remaining graphic, zoom position graphic, fader, low battery, low tape/no cassette, zero memory, dew, trouble, dirty heads, battery capacity remaining, age, date or time, replace clock battery

Viewfinder Controls: diopter focus, viewfinder angle, edit search rocker

VCR Controls: rewind/search, play, fast forward/search, stop, pause, record

Microphone: mono elec-

tret condenser

Jacks: external mic, video in/out, DC out to RF unit, audio in/out, earphone and LANC remote

Edit Search: 1x

Cue & Review Search: 5x forward, 7x reverse

Fast Forward/Rewind Time: approx. 6-1/4 min. for P6-120

Remote Pause: LANC 3-conductor submini

Remote Control: IR wireless with hold switch, wide-angle/telephoto zoom rocker and buttons for record start/stop, play, rewind/search, stop, pause/still, slow and data screen

Audio: hi-fi AFM mono

Titles/Graphics: age insert, date/time record

Special Features: still frame, frame advance, 1/5x slow motion, insert edit, flying erase head, counter memory

Absent Features: stereo sound, manual white balance, manual iris, indexing

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution: 250 lines

S/N Ratios (dB): unweighted video—41.6,

weighted video—49.4, chroma AM—42.1, chroma PM—39.0

Audio Frequency Response: 50 Hz-12.5 kHz, +0.1/-3 dB; -9.9 dB at 20 Hz; -7.3 dB at 20 kHz

Hi-Fi Dynamic Range: 69.8 dB

Audio Distortion: 0.3%

RATINGS

Picture: very good

Audio: good/very good

Ease of Use: excellent

Overall: very good/excellent



stills and slow motion. And of course, there's a standard full auto mode. White balance is completely automatic.

Trigger-operated fade, backlight compensation, time/date/age imprinting and focus may be adjusted manually. The zoom lever offers a moderate zoom speed and a super-fast speed that goes through the 10x zoom range in about three seconds, making quick shot framing easy. The viewfinder display gives all the details about which functions are operative, with a few cautions and graphic representations of zoom adjustment, tape remaining and battery condition. This data continually reassures the user that all is operating well.

The FX410's streamlined styling and blunt nose differentiate it from other shoe-style camcorders. Sony placed the camera controls in the usual places, but shifted the VCR controls and input/output jacks to the right side of the lens cowl. This arrangement allowed Sony to make the FX410 much smaller and lighter than last year's F-series models. The light weight, the "subcompact-with-a-snout" design and the folding viewfinder make it easy to carry and store.

Despite its simple design, the FX410 includes features that have become rare on small camcorders: an accessory shoe for attaching a light or a microphone, an audio/video input, a LANC connector for use with editing controllers, and jacks for an external microphone and an earphone. Finger ridges on the top panel prevent slipping.

The FX410 comes with a wireless remote control. It features a hold switch, a zoom rocker, VCR controls and a button

continued on page 17

VIDEOTEST
634

GOLDSTAR VHS VCR

Goldstar made its name with bargain-basement VCRs, but the company has steadily and successfully upgraded its line. The results can be seen in its top-of-the-line GVR-A485. It's intended for editing, but with a rental tape mode

and jog/shuttle dials on both the remote control and the VCR, it's no slouch as a home theater deck.

The GVR-A485 offers all the standard features of VCRs in its price class, including hi-fi stereo sound, four heads for clear stills and slow motion, and a cable-ready tuner with MTS/SAP sound and dbx noise reduction. And there are many nice extras. Audio dub and video dub make sophisticated editing possible, a flying erase head allows insert edits without glitches, and a front-panel input facilitates easy camcorder hookup. Synchro edit in and out jacks allow the deck to act as master or slave in an automated editing system with synchro edit-equipped Goldstar, Hitachi, and Hitachi-made RCA and Minolta equipment.

A one-page character generator with four type sizes makes titling easy, although it won't memorize titles. An auto head cleaner reduces the need for professional head cleaning. VISS index search with auto mark and manual mark/erase lets a user locate specific points on a tape easily. A feature called

HIGHLIGHTS

For camcorder users who want to get into editing inexpensively, Gold-

star's GVR-A485 may be the perfect VCR. At \$500, it's priced about the same as many bare-bones VHS hi-fi decks, but it includes all the features essential for editing: jog/shuttle dials on the VCR and the remote, a flying erase head, audio and video dub, a character titler and front inputs. On top of all this, its picture quality and ease of use are both very good to excellent and its audio quality is very good. We rate it very good to excellent, and recommend it highly.



"just fit recording" automatically sets the speed for a recording so it fits the remaining amount of tape.

The onscreen display can be set for English or Spanish. A monitor switch lets a user check tuner output during playback. The timer accepts eight programs for up to one year in advance and there is a calendar for years up to 2090 in the menu system.

In addition to normal VCR functions, the remote control operates power, volume, channel and mute for some TV sets from Sanyo, Goldstar, Sony, Magnavox, RCA and Zenith. A flap conceals many buttons. Buttons for mute, volume and channel project through the flap. Contouring makes the remote comfortable to hold.

Although most of the controls on the VCR are hidden in a compartment, it is still very easy to use because most are concentrated in one place and laid out logically. Most face upward, so the VCR can be placed on a low shelf. Rewind, eject and power off at the end of play are automatic, and if you turn off the power during rewind, it will com-



Editing for Everyman: One of the least expensive editing VCRs available, the Goldstar GVR-A485 includes a flying erase head and jog/shuttle dials.

plete rewind and power off without eject. The stereo/mono/SAP switch has automatic defaults if the selected signal is not present.

The unusual rental play switch deserves special praise for reducing noise on poor recordings. Some switches, like those for audio dub, video dub, synchro

edit and presetting the tuner, are not duplicated on the remote. But that's fine—most people edit from the deck, anyway. Clock set, timer programming, titling, calendar, display language and the color of the menu background can be accessed only from the VCR's menu system.

We rate ease of operation very good to excellent. Picture quality is very good to excellent. Audio quality is very good. These ratings are comparable to those of the best decks in the GVR-A485's price range. Combined with its impressive feature package, the deck's performance makes it an outstanding value. ■

Goldstar GVR-A485 VHS VCR

Price: \$500

Weight & Size (h/w/d): 11.5 lbs.; 3-1/4 x 14-1/4 x 13 inches

Tape Format & Speeds: VHS; SP, LP, EP

Video Heads: 4

Cue & Review Search: locking—5x SP, 10x LP, 15x EP; hold down—7x SP, 15x LP, 30x EP

Fast Forward/Rewind Time: approx. 3 min. for T-120

Remote Pause: synchro edit in and out compatible with Goldstar and Hitachi-built

systems

Front-Panel Controls: stop, play, fast forward/search, record, rewind/search, pause/still, power, eject, synchro edit, synchro edit start and stop, channel up and down, clock/counter/time remaining, reset, audio dub, video dub, TV/VCR, SP/LP/EP, tuner/simulcast/AV, auto program, add, erase, edit, rental, tape length, normal/mix/hi-fi, left/stereo/right, stereo/mono/SAP, headphone volume, record level left and right, jog/shuttle dial

Remote Control: IR wireless with TV/VCR switch, jog/shuttle dial, exposed buttons for

power, mute, volume up and down, channel up and down, eject, record, rewind/search, play/2x, fast forward/search, pause/still, stop, frame advance, VISS, mark, erase, slow, slow speed up and down, auto tracking and tracking up and down; covered buttons for 10 digits, 100, TV preset, menu, clear/monitor, display, TV/VCR, tuner/simulcast/AV, clock/counter/remain, reset, SP/LP/EP, QSR start and QSR length

Counter Digits: 5—hrs:mins:secs.

Program Start Locator/Index/Cue: index with auto mark, manual mark/erase and

bidirectional search up to 99 marks

Audio: linear mono, hi-fi AFM stereo

Titles/Graphics: 1 page, no memory, 4 type sizes, white

Tuning Method: frequency synthesis

Channel Selectors: programmable scan on VCR; scan plus direct access on remote

Preset Method: auto preset with manual add/erase

Tuning Range: 2 to 13, 14 to 69; 4A, A to W, W+1 to W+84, A-5 to A-1

Timer: 8-event/1-year

Power Backup Time: 10 min.

Special Features: jog/shuttle dial, flying erase head, frame advance, variable slow motion, 2x speed play, audio dub, video dub, insert edit, front-panel input, auto head cleaner, digital auto tracking, English/Spanish display, selectable onscreen display color, rental tape mode, headphone jack

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution: 230-240 lines

S/N Ratios (dB): unweighted video—44.6 SP, 42.5 LP, 43.4 EP; weighted video—51.8 SP, 51.2 LP, 51 EP; chroma AM—46.2 SP, 43.9 LP, 37.1 EP; chroma PM—40.9 SP,

35.7 LP, 36.2 EP

Audio Frequency Response: hi-fi—20 Hz-20 kHz, +0.8/-2.1 dB; linear (-3 dB)—75 Hz-10 kHz SP, 75 Hz-4 kHz LP and EP

Hi-Fi Dynamic Range: 83.5 dB

Linear Audio S/N: 42.8 dB

Audio Distortion: hi-fi—0.4%, linear—1.1%

RATINGS

Picture: very good/excellent

Audio: very good

Ease of Use: very good/excellent

Overall: very good/excellent

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8MM CAMCORDER

continued from page 15

to turn the onscreen data on and off.

Sony designs its F-series camcorders for ease of operation, and the FX410 fully embodies this principle. To shoot, just snap on a battery, insert a cassette, set the power switch to camera and the standby/lock switch to standby, select the proper AE mode with the dial, compose the shot with the zoom and hit the start/stop button. It will probably take you less time than it did to read the last sentence.

A beep tells you that you're recording and the red LED below the viewfinder screen will confirm it. (Switches behind the battery disable the beep and the remote.) If you've entered a birthday, an anniversary or an event date, the number of years and months from that date can be recorded on the picture. Of course, time and date can also be recorded. If there is a lot of light behind the subject, the locking backlight control opens the aperture a few stops for better pictures. The fader is triggered by

the start/stop button, and fades both video (to black) and audio.

If manual focus is selected, the ring at the front electrically controls the internal focusing element. This feels much more natural and precise than the awkward buttons found on many camcorders. The sports viewfinder lets you see the screen away from the eye, which proves useful when using a tripod. The shoulder-strap loops on the bottom make it easy to raise the FX410 to shooting position without moving the strap from your shoulder. The AC adapter also carries contacts for audio and video, so you can leave the adapter connected permanently to your TV set or VCR. The manual is thorough, well illustrated and easy to understand. Ease of use is excellent.

Picture quality is very good. In wide-angle mode, the lens produces a slight barrel distortion of subjects closer than two feet. Audio quality is good to very good, although unlike many newer 8mm camcorders, it is not stereo. Overall, we rate the CCD-FX410 very good to excellent. It probably won't satisfy advanced users, but it's perfect for those who just want to point and shoot. ■

TECH TIPS

Cable caution

When hooking up an RF cable to a TV or VCR, do not coil the excess. Coiling the cable will turn it into an antenna that can pick up interference. If you can't trim the cable to fit, run it in a series of right angles to take up the slack.

Ted P. Cantrell
Fort Lewis, Washington

Rewriting the book on camcorders

To more easily remember how to operate camcorder features you seldom use, consult the manual the first time you use the feature, then write down your own set of instructions in a three-by-six-inch, spiral-bound notebook. Chances are you'll find your own instructions easier to follow than those in the manual.

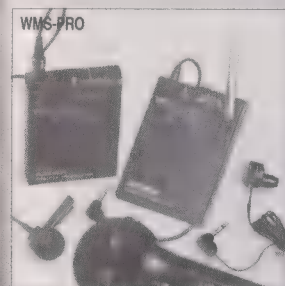
Peter diSandro
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

MAKING A GREAT VIDEO INCLUDES QUALITY SOUND TOO!

After using your camcorder the first time, you realize that the built-in microphone

picks up sounds from all directions, including those you

don't want. And, when shooting from a distance, you can't hear your subject's voice clearly. Azden, the leader in quality audio for video, offers a full line of microphones to make your sound as good as your pictures.



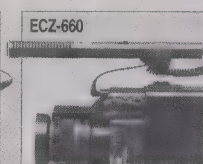
This powerful professional miniature VHF wireless system has a range of over 300 feet. It allows you to shoot from a distance and pick up your subject's voice clearly. It has 2 switchable frequencies, and it comes with 2 mics (handheld and clip-on). The transmitter clips to the subject's belt, and the mini receiver can attach to the camera (shoe mount & velcro included) or be kept in your breast pocket.



A professional VHF handheld microphone system with no wires. All the same features, and receiver as the WMS-PRO.



Headset with boom mic for adding narration as you shoot. Your voice becomes the dominant sound recorded. Or, use it to monitor sound you're recording.



Full-size directional mic. Allows you to zoom in on subject's voice, reducing side noises. Range 35-40 feet.



Mini directional mic for palm-sized camcorders. Slide switch for adjusting width of sound pick-up pattern. Low cut filter.



A mini 3 channel mic mixer for recording sound from 2 add-on mics and a personal stereo, while you're shooting. Only 2 1/8"x3 1/4" it can be attached to your camera or clipped to the handstrap. Cables included, needs no batteries.



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VIDEOTESTS

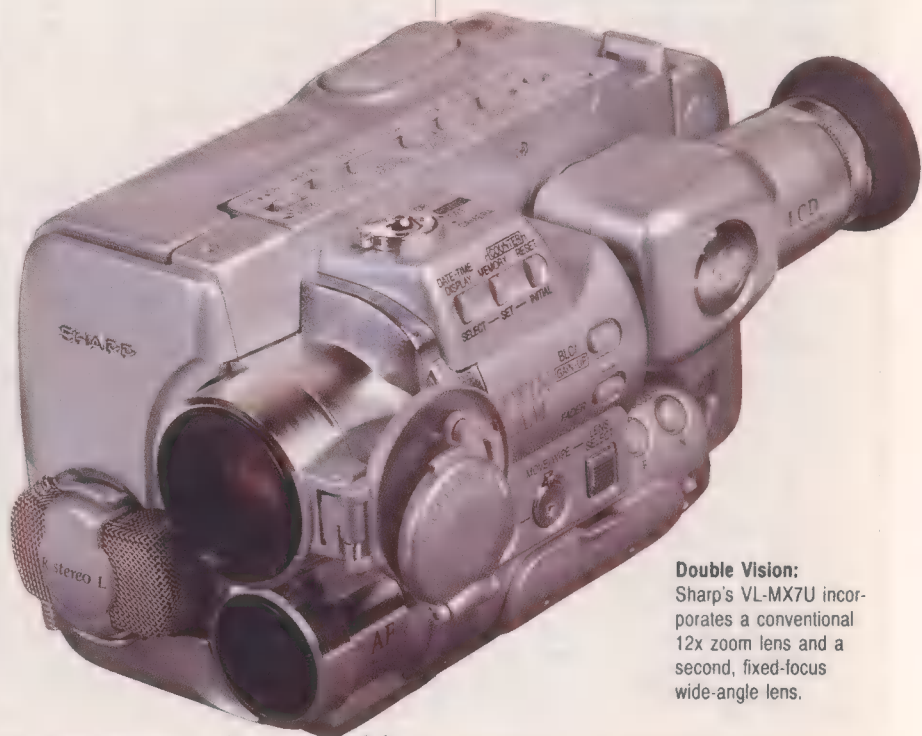
VIDEOTEST
635

SHARP 8mm camcorder

Sharp earned its reputation as a camcorder manufacturer with several unique full-size VHS machines. Now it has brought the same spirit of innovation into the 8mm field with two stunning new sub-compacts, the VL-M6U and VL-MX7U. Both feature two cameras, mounted one on top of the other. The top camera is the one you'll use most of the time, because it has a 12x zoom lens. The bottom camera uses a fixed-focus, wide-angle lens. The VL-MX7U reviewed here differs from the VL-M6U in that it includes a color LCD viewfinder and stereo sound, and costs \$200 more.

Lens select switches behind the zoom rocker and along the side allow a user to switch between the two cameras. You can go directly from a wide shot to a medium shot or close-up, or perform a box wipe between the two. A picture-in-picture button centers the image from the zoom lens inside the wide-angle shot. Another button moves the PIP window across the screen.

The camcorder's digitally operated automatic functions include auto white balance with lock, and autofocus (on



Double Vision:
Sharp's VL-MX7U incorporates a conventional 12x zoom lens and a second, fixed-focus wide-angle lens.

the zoom camera) with macro capability. Both use artificial intelligence, or fuzzy logic, to make compromise settings that would cause a straight digital system to balk. Other useful features include four high shutter speeds, a backlight compensator, gain up for low-light shooting and two-speed zoom.

The VL-MX7U we tested has a silver finish reminiscent of many old film cameras. A dark gray finish is also available. In many ways, it resembles Sony's TR-series camcorders. The twin cameras, however, set it apart. The bottom camera offers a 62-degree angle of view,

continued on page 27

HIGHLIGHTS

Sharp has entered the 8mm market with two of the most unusual camcorders ever produced. Both deliver a wide-angle picture using a second camera. The extra camera lets you cover almost an entire room, so you can shoot all the guests at the Thanksgiving table. Images from both cameras may be recorded PIP style, and you may also cut or wipe between the two images. The VL-MX7U reviewed here offers a good picture and very good audio and ease of use, for an overall very good rating. At \$1,699, it is a bit expensive, but its features are sure to appeal to many.

Sharp VL-MX7U Twin-Lens 8mm Camcorder

DATA

Price: \$1,699

Weight & Size (h/w/d):
1.5 lbs. without battery
or cassette; 4-1/8 x
4-1/2 x 7-3/4 inches

Image Sensor: 1/3-inch
CCD, 270,000 gross
pixels

Lenses: primary—f/2
-f/2.4, 8x (6-48mm)
two-speed power zoom,
secondary—f/2.4, 4mm,
fixed focus

Filter Diameter:
32.5mm

**Minimum Focusing
Distance:** primary—0.4
inches, secondary
lens—4 inches

Autofocus: primary—
digital continuous to
macro; secondary—
fixed focus

Minimum Illumination:
primary—4.2 lux nor-
mal, 3.2 lux gain up;
secondary—4.9 lux nor-
mal, 3.8 lux gain up (all
measured for 50 IRE)

Iris: automatic with
BLC and gain up
modes

Auto Fade: trigger op-
erated, about 4 sec.

Shutter Speeds (sec.):
normal (1/60), 1/100,
1/250, 1/1,000, 1/4,000,
1/10,000

White Balance: digital
full auto with lock

Viewfinder: 2/3-inch
color LCD with on-
screen indicators for
super wide-angle lens,
recording, pause, coun-
ter, date/time, shutter
speed, manual focus,
white balance lock,
gain up, BLC, fade,
dew, low battery, tape
end, no cassette, low
light, protect tab, heads
need cleaning

Viewfinder Controls:
vertical position, diopter
focus and brightness

VCR Controls: rewind/
search, play, fast for-
ward/search, stop,
pause/still, record

Microphone: stereo

electret condenser

Jacks: video/stereo au-
dio in/out, DC for RFU

Tape Format & Speed:
8mm, SP

Video Heads: 4 (small
head drum)

Edit Search: forward—
1x, reverse—3x

Cue & Review Search:
forward—7x, reverse—
5x

**Fast Forward/Rewind
Time:** 8-1/4 min. for
P6-120

Counter Digits: ■

Audio: hi-fi AFM stereo

Special Features:
switchable twin-lens
system, PIP in either

lens with positioning
and wipe, flying erase
head, counter memory,
edit search, still frame,
insert edit

Absent Features: re-
mote control, external
mic jack, indexing,
LANC jack for editing
control, earphone jack

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution:
recorder—250 lines,
viewfinder—200 lines

S/N Ratios (dB): un-
weighted video—40.6,
weighted video—47.9,

chroma AM—43.2,
chroma PM—39.4

**Audio Frequency
Response:** 40 Hz-15
kHz, +0.1/-3 dB, -3.9
dB at 20 Hz, -5.3 dB at
20 kHz

Hi-Fi Dynamic Range:
73.6 dB

Audio Distortion: 0.3%

RATINGS

Picture: good

Audio: very good

Ease of Use:
very good

Overall: very good

T O D A Y ' S *VIDEOGRAPHER*

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**Make
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**New Hardware Review:
Camcorders & Accessories**

Camcorder Charge It!

You've fully recharged your camcorder battery (at least that's what you thought). You didn't take any chances because what you're recording is simply too important to miss. Unfortunately, 15 minutes go by and your battery is dead and so are your chances of recording that once in a lifetime home video.

The trouble was not with the battery but with the battery recharger. Wide variances in battery design fre-



quently cause some battery chargers to undercharge batteries by as much as 20 percent. You paid the price for this in lost moments you meant to capture on tape. Instead, you should have used the new TC600 Turbo CamCharger from Arkon.

The TC600 is an AC/DC quick charger and reconditioner that is compatible with virtually all 6-volt 8mm and VHS-C nickel cadmium (NiCad) camcorder batteries. It has one switch (for battery capacity) and it is the first camcorder charger to feature "Top Off" charging, which compensates for wide variances in battery design and fully regulates charging while also preventing overcharging.

Operating the Turbo Cam-



Fujix-8 F122SW

Fuji gets a new look

Miniaturize the technology of a commercial television camera lens, and incorporate the capability into an 8mm compact camcorder zoom lens. Presto! The results are two new camcorders from Fuji; the Fujix-8 F122SW and the Fujix-8 F120SW.

Fuji's advanced lens technology enables users to capture details with clarity from as close as 0.6 inches. A powerful 12x zoom incorporates a super wide lens so there is never a loss in clarity. As the zoom ratio increases, all subjects are brought quickly into focus through the full range auto focus system. A wide angle setting also offers tremendous flexibility to capture broad images even though shooting space may be limited.

So that you can visualize how much better your shots are while still on location, the F122SW has a color LCD viewfinder, which lets you make informed creative decisions during the recording process. To facilitate low-and-high-angle shooting, the viewfinder can be adjusted to any position within a full 180 degree range and it retracts for compact storage. The Fujix-8 F120SW comes equipped with a black and white viewfinder that also adjusts to a 180 degree range.

And there's more. A unique, dual-position multi-action handgrip provides a choice of steady shooting options. In one position, it easily converts to a tripod. Unfolded, it becomes a stabilizing handgrip that helps minimize camera movement. A built-in trigger allows the camera to operate only when the trigger is held down, thereby reducing unin-

(continued on page 7)

Charger consists of three simple steps: The first involves erasing "battery memory." Repeated recharges cause reduced effectiveness in charge capacity especially in NiCad batteries. TC600 erases this effect and reconditions the battery to receive a full charge. Step two is a rapid electronically-controlled charge with three LED status indicators that tell you if a battery needs charging and monitors the entire process. A battery can be fully recharged in an hour. Step three is the "Top Off" charging feature, making use of an additional measuring circuit and not relying solely on voltage measurement the way other chargers do.

For added convenience an AC/DC adaptor is included so you can charge batteries at home, in your car or even on your boat. The TC600 ensures that your camcorder battery gets the safest, most efficient and complete charge possible and all with a flick of one switch. The TC-600's suggested retail price is \$99.95. Consider it an inexpensive insurance policy against lost video memories.

Great Sound, No Wires

There is an inherent problem with every camcorder. It is that while long distance shooting may be convenient, the audio always leaves something to be desired.

Wireless microphones offer home videographers an easy way to maintain top audio quality while your subjects

roam far and wide. The Azden WMS-PRO, for example, is the number one selling wireless microphone system for camcorder users. It is appropriately called a "system" because the company offers you a choice of an inconspicuous lavalier and a handheld microphone, either one of which you plug into a mini transmitter. Two switchable frequencies are available in case one happens to be noisy or occupied. The powerful VHF system offers you great audio reception within a range of 250 feet — and even greater in many open areas. The mini-receiver comes with a shoe mount and velcro attachment to the camera or you



can just tuck it into your breast pocket.

If all you need is a handheld microphone, the recently introduced WM/T PRO is the right option. This wire-free VHF handheld microphone's transmitter is built into the handle, the antenna is incorporated into the mesh grill and it has the same two switchable frequencies as the WMS-PRO. Azden also offers professional videographers the WHX-PRO, which combines the WM/T microphone with the PRO system receiver.

Regardless of the choice you make, these Azden wireless microphones will make



Sony CCD-FX510

Sony camcorders: Small & friendly

There's no reason to be afraid of advanced camcorder features. That is, if they're part of smartly-equipped, ergonomic camcorder designs like two new Sony Handycam® camcorder models, the Sony CCD-FX410 and CCD-FX510.

Both of these camcorders deliver the inherent benefits of 8mm video — high quality video, superior AFM hi-fi sound reproduction and up to 2.5 hours of recording on a single 8mm cassette. They also include a 10:1 optical zoom lens, full-range inner focus system that provides worry-free autofocus from close-up to infinity, high speed shutter (1/4000 sec), Flying Erase™ head and full-function wireless remote control. Also onboard is 10-bit digital camera signal processing that ensures minimal signal loss and accurate adjustment of focus, exposure and white balance.

Special user-friendly features specific to the CCD-FX410 include the three-mode AE (Auto Exposure) dial that combines program auto exposure and high speed shutter operation. This allows users to simply select among three modes to control exposure and depth of field: Portrait, to emphasize the subject while blurring the background; Sports, to easily choose shutter speed when capturing high-speed action; and High Speed Shutter when the fastest shutter speed (1/4000 sec.) is preferred. The minimum illumination is rated at 2 lux with good color reproduction. The viewfinder also flips completely forward for compact storage in carrying case.

Not to be outdone, the CCD-FX510 adds titles or graphics that can be added from a selection of eight colors using a digital superimposer that can either be scrolled or

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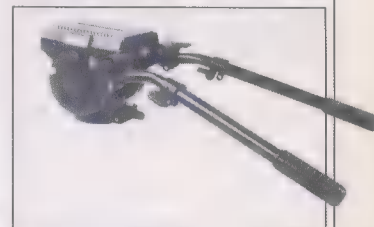
*Newest Sony 8mm
models stress
powerful features
and ease of use.*

TODAY'S VIDEOGRAPHER

a tremendous difference in the production quality of your home videos. The camcorder manufacturers have concentrated on improving the picture quality. It's up to you to make the most of your sound.

Tripod Heads Are Better Than None

The tripod you use can have a dramatic effect on the quality of your home videos. That's because "steady" doesn't always mean "smooth." Bogen, an indus-



try leader in tripod design, has elevated the video tripod to new levels of stability with the introduction of two new fluid tripod head units.

The Bogen 3066 cine/fluid head can handle camcorders and accessories weighing as much as 22 lbs. This professional quality tripod head is designed with telescoping handles for cine and video cameras. The large, removable camera platform has a mounting stud that travels in a 3-1/2 inch slot and facilitates balancing at the camera's center-of-gravity. The fluid head pans 360 degrees and the panning drag can be adjusted by means of a simple adjustment screw. Tilting range is 60 degrees up to 90 degrees

down with the camera under perfect control at all times.

The 3130 QR Micro fluid head weighs only 2-1/4 lbs. and has an adjustable handle that can be positioned on either the left or right side to hold just about any of the new video camcorders (up to 8-3/4 lbs.). It allows a smooth 360 degree pan, can be tilted up or down 90 degrees, has pan and tilt locks and a continuously adjustable positioning slot for best camera balance.

The 3066 Cine/Video fluid head has a suggested retail price of \$405 and the 3130 QR Micro Fluid Head retails for \$84.95.

Big & Better Video Views

You should expect the same creative flexibility from your camcorder as you get from your 35mm camera. For the increasingly popular mini-camcorders and smaller palm-size models, Kenko has



introduced a compact lens set (1.5x telephoto and 5x wide-angle) with a 37mm thread.



Lights, action, CameraMan

What's often missing from your home videos? Mostly, the answer is "you." Shooting requires a selfless family member or friend who gives up being involved in the action to ensure that everyone else is preserved on tape for posterity. Other times, it's a smooth picture because of a shaky camera hand or just spontaneity since people know they're being recorded and they are uncomfortable with it.

To solve these problems, ParkerVision introduces the CameraMan, a breakthrough home video robotics device that doesn't require someone behind the camera. It is a revolutionary new consumer version of automation systems now in use at major broadcast locations.

The product is composed of two parts, a base unit and a wand. The base couples with virtually any camcorder and contains a precision-crafted system of robotics that pans 360 degrees, tilts and produces camera movements that are surer, swifter and smoother than hand-held shots — and it performs all functions utilizing computerized speed control. The wand serves as an electronic tracking device so that the camcorder actually follows you wherever you roam. It also incorporates a wireless microphone so that your audio is recorded at the source without ambient noise or camcorder hum. A "stealth" feature amazingly tracks subjects even if they disappear behind trees or other objects and locates them when they re-emerge.

What's more, camcorders with remote control operation are fully operational by CameraMan's magic wand, which can be programmed to recreate all camcorder zooms and

(continued on page 7)

*ParkerVision's
CameraMan
creates the ultimate
videomaking
machine*

With these valuable accessories, a videographer can most easily capture all the action using the 5x wide-angle lens and for the occasions where a close-up is preferred, there's the 1.5x tele-converter. The set comes with two lenses in protective pouches for storage and lens caps to keep out the dust. The bright and colorful packaging includes sample photos of the effects that the lenses produce while on the other side there are simple directions for use and technical specifications. Metal housing assures lens durability, high quality optical glass is used throughout and step rings are also available so they can affix to any camcorder model.

Kenko is also now selling its own high quality photo and video filters for the first time in America. These filters, which are already the best selling models in Japan, Southeast Asia and several European countries, include more than 40 different types of models; among them are several patented special effect models. The video filters will be packaged in bright blister packs with photos demonstrating the effect of each filter.

Comfort for Camcorders

Back pain, ouch! All your camcorder equipment is becoming a pain in the neck. The innovative Back Strap or Compact Video Strap™ from OP/TEC USA may be just what you need.

Both these products are made of a soft neoprene pa-

Mitsubishi CX7



Small but powerful sharpshooters

*New Mitsubishi
video lightweights
pack features
with a punch.*

What do you want from a camcorder? If you're looking for one that's lightweight, simple to use and still loaded with advanced video technology, then the new line of VHS-C camcorders from Mitsubishi is for you. There are three new advanced

models to choose from: two palm-size models, the S-VHS-C HS-CX7u and VHS-C HS-CX4u, and the upscale S-VHS-C HS-C35u that features three interchangeable lenses.

Mitsubishi has made shooting easy, having predetermined optimum camera settings for each situation and then grouping them under a corresponding icon. By selecting one of the icons, the HS-CX7u and HS-CX4u automatically set brightness, iris, white balance (color temperature), auto-focus sensitivity, shutter speed and focal center.

The palm-sized HS-CX7u and HS-CX4u are among the lightest models on the market, weighing just 1.4 pounds. They also come equipped with an innovative StableCam function that smooths out unwanted jumpiness during filming. More powerful than ordinary Electronic Image Stabilization (EIS) technology, StableCam even senses whether image motion is due to camera or subject movement. As a result, the natural shake and jitter of the human hand is never a factor in recording the moment you want to capture.

The HS-CX7u and HS-CX4u boast many other features that simplify their operation. There is a logical system of on-screen menus and a convenient system of viewfinder-based alarms that warn of tape or power problems. A built-in sliding lens cap eliminates the annoyance of a cap dangling from a string in front of you. The HS-CX7u also offers Hi-Fi stereo.

(continued on page 6)

it is — your videos should have your own stamp on them. Your signature should be your own.

—Arthur Ornitz,

There are some people the camera just loves. You can't change that. When the camera loves you, you're very lucky.

—Aaron Spelling,

My theory is, when you're looking at a film, you're seeing a flat piece projected on a flat surface. A director should change camera angles a lot to involve the audience. You want the audience to feel a part of a group rather than just being observers. The only way you can approach this 3-D feeling is to cross over and get the camera right in there.

—Clint Eastwood

My years in live television have told me this: You just can't put a camera on something, shoot it and hope — that never works. Planning is everything. Every move, every camera shot needs to be worked out in advance, as well as in detail.

—John Frankenheimer,

Camcorder Accessory Checklist

✓ Case or Bag. Look for something lightweight, with plenty of dividers and pockets that will expand with your growing collection of gear. Make sure the strap is comfortable!

✓ Tripod. Make sure it is designed for video, not for

able add combined with comfort
can stretch backing, which
on using makes your bag or compact
lens and camcorder feel 50% lighter
where and 100% more comfort-
ble. The Bag Strap has
ter. Three types of connection
o lenses capabilities so that it can
for storing easily adapt to bags and
to keep cases of all types. The result
right and a secure, comfortable
including transportation system for
the effective expensive camera or video
product year.

er side The OP/TECH USA's
director Compact Video Strap™ also
l specifies a similar weight reduc-
on system that combines
ty, high with a Non Slip Grip™
s is used which enables you to safely
ep ring carry your video slung over
so the your shoulder without wor-
ncord worrying about it slipping or
iding off. The OP/TECH



USA "connection system"
allows you to customize the
length of the strap with five
options of connectors.

Your aching shoulders will
thank you for these acces-
sories. The suggested retail
price of the Compact Video
Strap™ is \$17.95, while the
Bag Strap retails for \$24.95.
Both products are 100%
made in the USA.

Tips From The Pros

Whether it's a new way of
looking at color or lighting
or composition — whatever

still photography; look for a fluid pan head, lightweight aluminum construction, and quality pan/tilt gears.

✓ **Brace.** Sometimes you have to move and a tripod won't do. Some sort of brace or prop is also advised. The Steadicam Jr. is highly recommended here.

✓ **Auxiliary Batteries.** You never have enough juice. So bring along backups and, of course, make sure they are already charged. Several battery rechargers plug into your car battery in case you still run low while in the field.

✓ **Lights.** Of course, you need a light that plugs directly into your camcorder. But, if you are really serious, separate studio lights (with their own stands) are also recommended.

✓ **Microphones.** Several different varieties will help improve your video's sound. At least one wireless mic and one shotgun should be tucked into your production accessory sack.

✓ **Lens Adapters.** For those tough to get shots, an add-on telephoto lens adapter will come in handy. The 1.5 magnification variety generally does the job.

✓ **Color Monitor.** A portable TV will help you get a better picture of what you've captured on tape than the EVF. If you don't mind the load, a small CRT is advised, but for lighter loads a portable LCD model is still an improvement.

✓ **35mm Camera.** Yes, don't forget a camera. Still photos will come in useful

Nady HT-10



Wireless mics get the message

Advanced videographers demand nothing less than professional sound to go along with their productions — without background hiss or overload distortion. To address their needs, Nady has introduced two new microphone systems; the Nady 551 VR Two Channel Wireless Video Microphone system and the 351 VR Ultra-Compact Wireless Microphone system for video camcorders.

The Nady 351 VR eliminates the problems inherent in camcorder onboard mics, allowing the mic to be placed at a sound source up to 200 feet away. This ultra-compact unit is about the size of an audio cassette, and it connects to any camcorder through its external mic jack. The receiver attaches either to the camcorder shoe mount or it can be used with an included belt clip. A Nady microphone transmitter, the HT-10 wireless handheld mic or LT-20 lavalier, comes standard with the 351 VR system. Nady's specialized companding noise reduction circuitry provides an unparalleled dynamic range of 120 dB. The system operates on one of two VHF frequencies, allowing operation of up to two 351 VR systems in the same location.

If pro quality sound is what you desire, then move up to the Nady 551 VR which offers the same features as the 351 VR but with two user-selectable VHF frequencies, professional connections and an all-metal rugged design. The 551 VR receiver also features a balanced audio output jack and a headset output. The system includes the same HT-10 handheld microphone or the 551 LT two-channel bodypack transmitter that features Surface Mount Technology, a mini-XLR connector to accept any electret condenser lavalier microphone, and a road ready, all metal case. It retails for under \$500 and the 351 VR has a suggested retail price of about \$300.

*Nady introduces
two new ultra-compact wireless mics*

during the editing process (that is, if you are equipped with a converter like the Tamron Fotovix). An electronic still camera is an alternative that is especially valuable for desktop video editing and effects.

Mitsubishi

(continued from page 5)

To bridge the gap between consumer and professional camcorders, Mitsubishi also offers the HS-C35u. Weighing only 2.1 pounds, it combines the high resolution of S-VHS, the creative flexibility of three interchangeable lenses and an easy-to-use operating system.

With more than 400 lines of resolution, recording and playback of the HS-C35u delivers clear, sharply defined images. An inner lens focus system rotates a smaller inner lens rather than the larger heavier outer lens, resulting in quicker focusing and longer battery life. The inner lens system also incorporates an advanced 1/10,000 second high speed shutter. The HS-C35u lenses include the expanded 6x zoom capability of the normal lens (9-54mm), a telephoto lens (14.2-85mm) for tight shots and the wide angle lens (5.9-35.4mm) that expands for panoramic vistas. Regardless of the choice, there is a perfect lens for every situation.

The operational commands of the HS-C35u are simple to operate and they're divided into logical on-screen menus and few dedicated buttons. Through the viewfinder, the consumer can rapidly speed

15 expert video shooting tips

through a menu display of the most frequently used functions. And your pictures perfect are complemented by Hi-Fi stereo sound.

The suggested retail price for the S-VHS-C HS-CX7u is \$1,299. For the VHS-C HS-CX4u, the suggested retail price is \$1,199 and the S-VHS-C HS-C35u has a suggested retail price of \$1,699.

Sony

(continued from page 3)

reversed. With its high-sensitivity CCD image sensor, the minimum illumination of CCD-FX510 is rated at an extra-low 1 lux. It also features a large LCD information display on the side of the camcorder that shows all camera settings for easy monitoring. The newly-designed detachable EZ snap-on connector allows for instant hook up of video, audio and power for direct playback on TV.

The CCD-FX410 carries a suggested retail price of \$1,100 and the CCD-FX510 carries a suggested retail price of \$1,200.

CameraMan

(continued from page 4)

special effects. The wand operates like any universal learning remote except that it functions up to 100 feet away and does not have to be in the line of sight as camcorder remotes do. The wand will also control all camcorder functions via a control unit that stores commands for two camcorders,

1 Bring plenty of extra battery power. *You can never have too much power.*

2 Invest in production accessories: tripods for stability, lights for image quality, microphones for sound quality and a case to carry it around and protect your investment.

3 When doing a hand-held shoot, steady your whole body as much as possible by leaning on something or forming a rigid stance with your legs.

4 Plan out your shots (sequence, movements, angles, etc.) completely before you begin shooting.

5 If possible, avoid walking while shooting. Find something with wheels and dolly the scene.

6 Don't overuse the zoom.. And don't use the zoom when you can easily pause the camcorder, move in for a close-up, and resume shooting.

7 One of the most basic formulas for setting up action and introducing a scene is to shoot a long shot, followed by a medium shot of the subject, which is followed by a close-up.

8 The inside of your lens cap is a boring shot. Make sure it is off before you shoot.

9 Don't rely on lux ratings. If a scene looks too dark in your viewfinder it probably is — bring along extra lighting if your location doesn't have alternate light sources.

10 Learn how to use the camcorder before the big day. Practice and become familiar with all of its features.

11 Always rewind your tapes when you are finished shooting. Also, don't leave your tapes in the camcorder — it can crinkle or crease the tape.

12 If you have to use your camcorder as a VCR, invest in a rewinder. It'll save wear and tear on the camcorder's motors and gears.

13 When editing, use effects sparingly. Never use an effect just for the sake of using an effect. Also, make sure to edit events in a logical sequence.

14 Keep your camcorder clean and well-maintained so that you can always rely on it.

15 After recharging your battery several times, let it drain completely by letting the camcorder run or by using a discharger.

while it is inconspicuously plugged into the back of the CameraMan base.

Up to four key locations can be preset in CameraMan's electronic brain so that at the touch of a button a new location can be recalled and focused on. You can program the device to automatically cycle between locations. Other features include pan/tilt override which allows users to select camera moves individually, smoothly panning and tilting for precise images. The camcorder easily disconnects from the base unit in case a spontaneous "freehand" shot is what's required.

Currently, the CameraMan is available directly only from ParkerVision. A full demonstration videotape and sales brochure is available by calling: 1-800-428-8543.

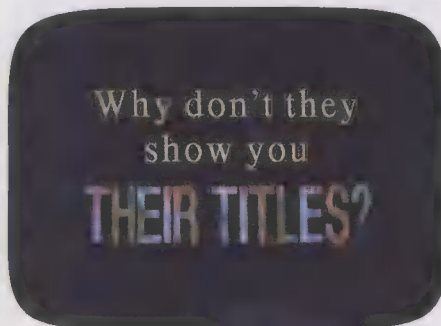
Fuji

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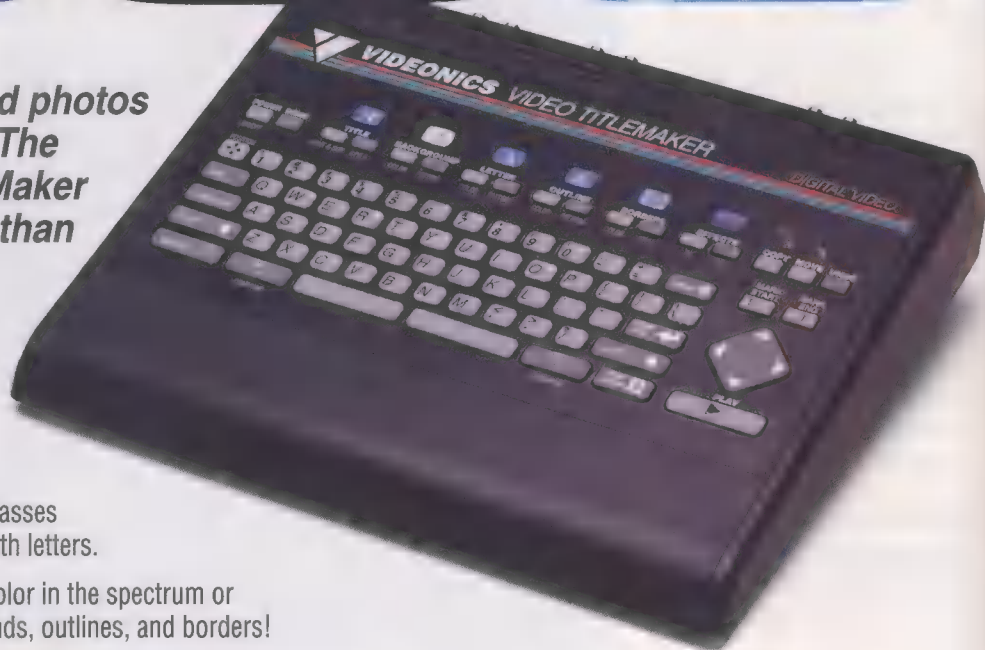
tentional recording. The F122SW also has a remote control receiver for full long distance operation.

Other features include a seven-speed electronic shutter, high performance microphone, time/date recording, edit search for quick review, and a unique mode menu display function on the viewfinder or TV. Both camcorders come with a Fuji 8mm videocassette, rechargeable battery pack, AC power adapter, lithium battery(for memory), RFU adapter and AV cable. The suggested retail price for the F122SW is \$1,600. The F120SW's suggested retail price is \$1,400.

ONE TITLER SPEAKS FOR ITSELF



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2-LENS CAMCORDER

continued from page 18

the widest available on a consumer camcorder without the use of adapters. This makes shooting indoors much easier—you'll seldom find yourself backing up against walls to get everyone in the picture. The top camera is fairly conventional. Two attached lens caps fold open to the right. The lower one folds up to nestle in the upper one and the whole assembly hinges backward to lie along the left side of the camcorder.

Because there are two lens and sensor assemblies, there are two bulges on the left side instead of one, but the space between them is mostly filled in and used as a control surface with buttons for picture-in-picture, move/wipe and lens select. On the camera bulge above are buttons for BLC/gain up and fader. On the lower camera bulge are far and near buttons for manual focus of the zoom lens. A covered compartment with input/output jacks for video and stereo audio, and a DC output for an RF adapter. An output/edit/input switch controls the function of the video/stereo audio jacks.

The viewfinder can be rotated up for low-angle shooting. The back part of the finder telescopes backward for shooting and collapses for easy transport. The VCR controls on top double as controls for camera functions such as autofocus on/off and shutter speed select.

The rear panel has grooves and contacts for the battery, and looks like it should accept the battery type used by Sony and many other brands, but ridges on the camcorder prevent interchangeability. Similarly, a lip on the battery prevents using it on other brands of camcorders.

Surprisingly, the silver color makes the camcorder less forbidding and the legends easier to read. Using the MX7 is very simple because, as on most camcorders, all basic operations are performed with the right hand, including lens selection. Even PIP and wipe effects are easy to create, because those buttons are large and easily found. But distinguishing between them should have been made easier by using differently shaped buttons rather than the tiny bump used on one and the depression on the other. The buttons above them for BLC/gain up and fade are fairly easy to tell apart.

Having the transport controls do double duty as camera controls elegantly reduces button count, but it spreads the area over which the left hand must move during shooting. The color viewfinder makes you more sensitive to color

balance and clashing colors than a black-and-white finder, but it offers only 200 lines of horizontal resolution, which is not enough detail for accurate manual focusing.

Because there's no earphone jack, you must trust the camcorder to do a good job on sound rather than checking it for yourself. It has no mic jack, so you can't use a wireless or shotgun mic for distant sounds. Finally, it has no LANC or synchro edit jack, so you can't use it with an edit controller, and you can't take advantage of the synchro edit feature found on some VCRs. Sharp points out that its target customer is unlikely to want those sophisticated options. Operational ease is very good.

Picture quality is good, highlighted by a very good to excellent chroma AM signal-to-noise ratio, but brought down by average unweighted video S/N and chroma PM S/N. The gain-up switch improves low-light sensitivity by about one lux. But as with most, if not all, camcorders there is an increase in picture noise in the gain-up mode. Audio quality is very good compared to similarly equipped 8mm camcorders.

Overall, we rate the VL-MX7U very

good. We do wish it had a few more jacks, but we love the dual-camera design and find the performance quite acceptable for a subcompact 8mm camcorder. ■

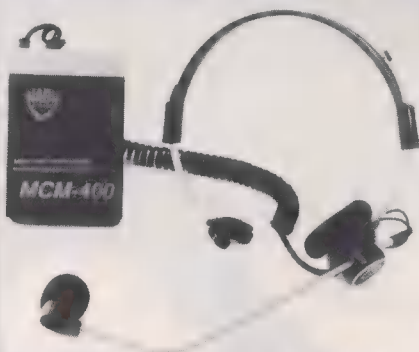
TECH TIP

Home run video

You need a tripod to get good shots of a baseball game. But using a tripod from behind the chain-link cage surrounding the batter leaves about 18 inches between the fence and the lens, and the fence becomes superimposed over your subject. To remedy this problem, lengthen one tripod leg all the way. Then shorten the other two so they stand almost flush against the fence, bringing your lens to within inches of the fence. But watch out for foul tips, and be sure to keep one hand on the tripod to keep it from falling over.

Paul Anderegg
San Diego, California

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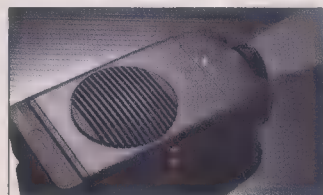
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Fujix P-40U Handy Projector

widest possible audience. To that end, Fuji offers you the revolutionary Fujix P-40U Handy Projector.

The Fujix P-40U weighs less than a pound, but it projects like a heavyweight—up to a 40-inch diagonal image to be exact. And since it works with your television, VCR, camcorder or videodisc player, you can entertain a large crowd with anything from your own creations, to big sports events, to your favorite movie classics.



In short, Fuji provides all the ingredients necessary to enhance the enjoyment of your video experience. See it for yourself.

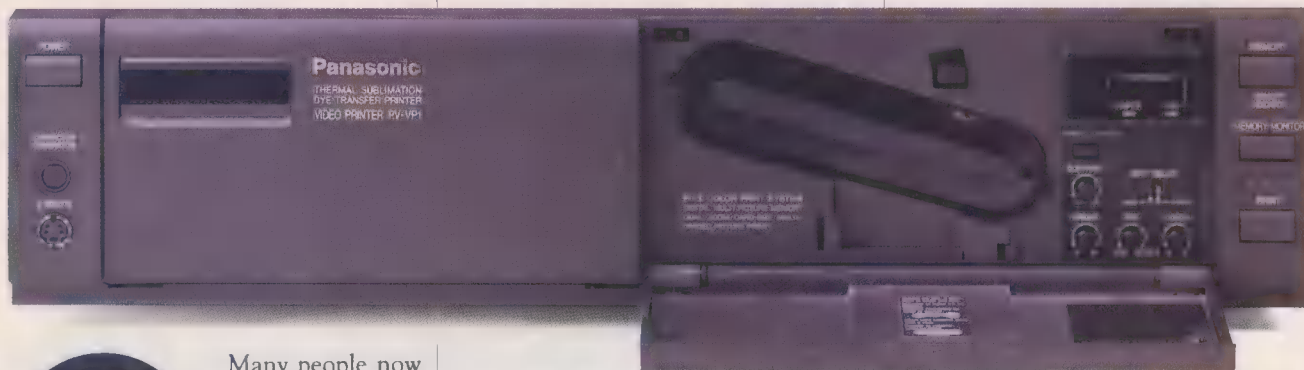
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VIDEOTESTS



VIDEOTEST
636

PANASONIC video printer

equipment and a little skill. Video printers are an easy-to-use alternative.

Video printers are still expensive, but as we've come to expect from high-tech products, the price is dropping and the quality is improving. The Panasonic PV-VP1 breaks new ground in color reproduction, while coming in at a lower price than many competing printers. However, with supplies starting at \$1 a print, it can be expensive to operate.

Many people now carry camcorders instead of film cameras, but often wish they could get stills from videotape to share with relatives and friends. It has always been possible to make film pictures from a TV screen, but this requires the correct

Up Close and Personal: Panasonic's PV-VP1 makes prints from any video source, and zooms in for closeups.

It produces images measuring 3-5/16 by 4-5/16 inches on postcard-size paper. The printer accepts both video and S-video signals and uses one video field to make images. Eight-bit digitization gives 256 gradations of yellow, cyan and magenta from ink applied by a thermal sublimation dye transfer process. Color gradation is smoother than with the Sony CVP-G500 ("Videotests," Sept. '90), which offered only 64 gradations of each color.

Pictures may be captured from moving or still video and stored in digital memory. The PV-VP1 makes prints from an image in memory in about 80 seconds. It also can make up to nine copies of the same picture automatically.

Zoom and cursor buttons allow a user to enlarge one portion of the field. As with the digital zooms on many Panasonic and Hitachi camcorders, this

zoom enlarges the pixels of a specific part of an image. The result is that objects appear larger, but not sharper. A divided picture button selects the composite mode, which produces a multiple-image print from two, four, nine, 16 or 25 images. Multiple-image compositions may be copies of the same image, differ-

HIGHLIGHTS

While color video printers have been around for a few years, their high cost has kept them from taking off. Panasonic's PV-VP1 color video printer may help change that. Its \$1,300 price is lower than that of most of its competitors, and its color reproduction capability is the greatest of any consumer video printer to date. It lets the user zoom in on the picture, or combine as many as 25 images on one print. Picture quality, ease of use and overall performance are all very good to excellent. Compared to shooting TV screens with a film camera, it's expensive, but it's incredibly fast and convenient.

Panasonic PV-VP1 Video Printer



Price: \$1,300, ink cassette/paper set supplies—standard 50 sheets (VW-VS50P, \$60), standard 100 sheets (VW-VS100P, \$100), adhesive-backed 50 sheets (VW-VSS50P, \$85)

Weight & Size (h/w/d): 16.5 lbs., 4-3/8 x 17 x 14-1/2 inches

Paper Size: 3-15/16 x 5-13/16

Image Size: 3-5/16 x 4-5/16

Printing System: thermal sublimation dye transfer

Printing Head: film thermal type, 5.6 dots/mm

Picture Quality: 256 gradations for each color (field memory)

Ink Colors: yellow, cyan, magenta

Printing Speed: 80 secs. per print, continuous up to 9 prints

Picture Memory: 8-bit, 1 field

Front-Panel Controls: buttons for power, memory, memory monitor, print and print counter, rotary controls for contrast, brightness,

tint and color, and slide switch for video/S-video input

Remote Control: IR wireless with buttons for power, 4/9/16/25 multi, dual, one-shot erase, strobe, card size (2 images), zoom, divided picture, four cursors, memory, memory monitor, print, counter and clear

Inputs: front—S-video and character generator, rear—S-video and video

Outputs: S-video and video

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution: 400 lines, 540 (h) x 468 (v) dots

Picture S/N (dB): unweighted luminance—49.8, weighted luminance—54.6, unweighted video—40.4, weighted video—50.6, chroma AM—48, chroma PM—51.8 (all measurements taken from digital pic-

ture in memory)

Accuracy of Colors: very good/excellent

RATINGS

Picture: very good/excellent

Ease of Use: very good/excellent

Overall: very good/excellent

ent images, or strobed sequences automatically collected over ■ three-second period. Images in a composite may be erased one at a time from the last one so you can make corrections.

The contrast, brightness, color and tint of each image may be adjusted before it is stored. Titles may be added with an optional character generator. The special printing paper and ink ribbon can both be loaded from the front.

The PV-VP1 is about the size of ■ typical VHS VCR. It has S-video and video inputs and outputs on the rear, and inputs for S-video and a character generator on the front. A front-panel selector determines whether the S-video or video input is active. Connecting an S-video input to the front panel jack automatically disconnects the signal supplied to the rear S-video jack. There is no front composite video input.

Using the printer is fairly straightforward. Load the paper in the tray, being careful not to get fingerprints on the print surface. Take up the slack in the ink ribbon and insert the ink cassette into the slot. Attach the power cord, ■ signal source and a monitor. Select the S-video or video signal source and adjust contrast, brightness, tint and color. Store the picture to be printed by pushing the memory button. Both the memory and print indicators will light.

Press the print button to make ■ print or the memory monitor to return to the incoming signal. You may not store a new picture if the memory indicator is lit without pressing print or monitor to view the source, and you can only print when the print indicator is lit.

The remote control carries buttons for the basic printing functions, plus



Video Snapshots: Prints shot from laserdisc images show accurate colors and good detailing.

zoom and divided picture. A user can also make prints from the front panel. If you have to make picture quality adjustments, more than one try may be necessary if your monitor is not adjusted to match what the printer delivers. Ease of use is very good to excellent.

Because the output is a print rather than a TV picture, it's difficult to measure the performance of this device. For example, the horizontal resolution as assessed by a TV resolution chart is slightly above 400 lines; however the picture is composed of 540 dots horizontally by 468 dots vertically.

There is no way to measure the sig-

nal-to-noise ratios of the pictures directly. There is no visible variation in evenness (luminance noise) from an S-video 50 percent gray field, although it is very hard to see low levels of noise in a small video picture. On ■ 50 percent gray composite video signal, there was no visible noise, only artifacts from luminance/chrominance separation, which showed up as lines tinged with color.

From a completely red field the eye cannot distinguish variations in color intensity (chroma AM noise) or hue (chroma PM noise). Compared to the same picture on ■ 25-inch TV screen the prints appear to have a video S/N of more than 55 decibels and chroma AM and PM S/Ns of more than 65 dB. Visually the pictures are as good as the best we've seen from video prints of this size. Zoomed images may be more grainy than a complete field, and smaller multi-images may lose detail.

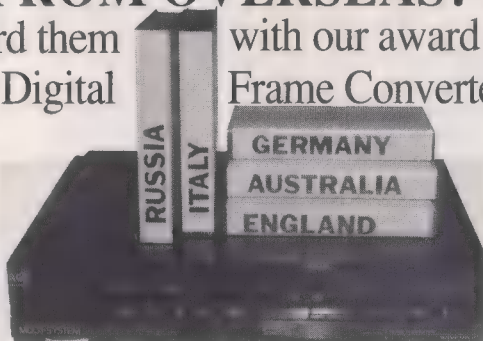
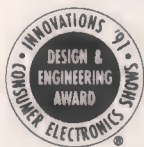
The only measurements we were able to take directly are S/N ratios of the digitized image stored in memory before printing. While the data we show (see box) should not be directly compared with the estimated picture quality figures in our earlier video printer test, we rate picture quality as excellent compared to similarly priced printers. Compared to more expensive industrial-grade printers, some of which make larger images, we rate it very good.

If you're in the market for a video printer, this one's ■ must-see. Even if you're not, you should check one out at ■ local dealer. We've discovered countless uses for these printers here at the magazine, and we think you might find them as indispensable as we do. ■

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HANDS ON TEST

FUJI P-40U 40-inch picture from a pocket projector

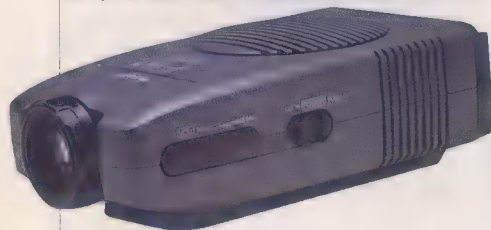
BY RON GOLDBERG

Mention the words "projection monitor" to most videophiles and you'll get a reaction somewhere between longing and fear. Almost everyone loves the big picture, but video projectors are huge, difficult to set up and expensive. Or are they?

Not if you look at the Fujix P-40U Handy Projector, which is two parts cutting-edge technology to one part science fiction. Conceived by Fuji as a camcording accessory, the P-40U is a one-pound LCD projector that will run off either a camcorder battery or AC. While the image quality won't make anyone forget HDTV, the idea of a handheld projection monitor that can throw images of up to 40 inches and won't even be the biggest piece in a camera bag is nothing short of miraculous.

Fuji has designed the P-40U to be a complete portable playback system, to be used anytime it's inconvenient or impossible to use a conventional direct-view monitor. In addition to its video capabilities, the unit includes two built-in speakers and a miniature stereo amp (!) which delivers 150 milliwatts of output.

Audio/video connections are handled by three RCA jacks on the side of the unit—S-video is not supported. The rear panel of the P-40U includes an input for the included 6-volt AC adapter, as well as a frame for a standard NP-55 or NP-77H camcorder battery. The P-40U will run for about 13 minutes with



One-Pound Wonder: Fuji's P-40U projector uses a single LCD panel to project a large, watchable image.

the former and a half-hour with the latter, provided both are fully charged.

Naturally, a design this radical (though not, at \$799, inexpensive) is bound to be compromised somewhere,

and in the case of the P-40U, it's the picture quality. Most LCD projectors use three liquid-crystal panels, one each for red, green and blue. A dichroic mirror system typically combines the output of the three panels into a single full-color image. The P-40U employs a single LCD panel.

Three shutters tinted to the primary RGB colors blend the image into a correctly colored composite, and an 18-watt halogen lamp projects the picture through a manually focused 55mm, 2.8 lens. The total pixel count for the P-40U is 89,000, a meager number compared to the several hundred thousand that full-size projectors from Sharp and

models that feature a removable grip, like the F60 WIDE and the M890. The monitor can mount on this grip, which in effect becomes a miniature tripod. Connect the P-40U this way and you have a remote-controllable two-channel A/V record/playback system weighing less than five pounds.

LCD video still has a long way to go, mostly because of difficulties and expense in manufacture. However, products like the P-40U are a clear indicator that remarkable accomplishments are imminent. It's now possible to produce a watchable 20-inch picture (the P-40U's optimum screen size) from a projector scarcely bigger than a VHS cassette. ■

Diving Buddy: Sony's SPK-TRX sports case, shown near the Great Barrier Reef, can take TR51 and TR81 Handycams to a depth of two feet.



SONY SPK-TRX A waterproof way to shoot

BY RICH WARREN

Salt water need not be a barrier to shooting terrific videos of one of the world's most famous sights, the Great Barrier Reef. Best reached from Cairns, Australia, the reef is at least a two-battery experience. While serious divers need bulky marine cases, snorkelers swimming just beneath the water's surface can capture the experience with a housing like the Sony SPK-TRX sports case.

The \$200 case, suitable for CCD-

Magnavox employ. As a result, the P-40U's images are "dotted" with the missing pixels. Although the actual video information is reasonably sharp and clear, the overall effect of the picture is not unlike that of a pointillist painting.

Obviously, the Fujix is not intended to compete with traditional monitors. Rather, it serves as an extremely useful accessory, especially for camcorder shoots and business presentations. For example, the director of a video shoot can now see the action as it's being shot, without having to serve double duty as the cameraperson. The P-40U and a piece of white paper or posterboard will handily substitute for a TV monitor when shooting in places where AC power is unavailable, like the great outdoors. Anyplace where a TV won't go, the P-40U will.

In addition, the P-40U makes an interesting sidekick to Fuji camcorder

TR51 and CCD-TR81 Handycams, is a relatively simple waterproof housing rated for shooting down to two feet, which makes it fine for snorkeling. To try out the case, I sailed to nearby Michémas Cay aboard the catamaran Ocean Spirit. At the reef, the water is exceptionally clear, and the light is good down to about 15 feet. The most photogenic marine life lives in this range, including living coral gently fingering the water and giant clams as large as small cars. The SPK-TRX held a foot or two underwater vividly captured this exotic world. (If you want to go all the way to 246 feet, you'll need Sony's MPK-TRS housing for \$1,200.)

To insert the camcorder, a TR81, into the case, I removed a metal shoe from the SPK-TRX and screwed it to the tripod mount on the bottom of the camcorder, using a screw that comes with the case. Then I slid the shoe and the camcorder into the slot on the bottom of the case. I plugged the case's waterproof external microphone cable into the mic jack, and the remote cable into the camcorder's remote jack. Next, I covered the rubber gasket with "O-ring" silicone grease, also supplied, and latched the case shut.

The case adds about 18 ounces to the weight of the camcorder, and only increases the dimensions about an inch on each side. This makes the complete package lighter and smaller than many an uncased 8mm or VHS-C model.

The case's controls duplicate the camcorder's standby/pause ring, start/stop record button and zoom rocker—and function as smoothly as those on the camcorder. The case's external monaural mic works well.

One thing to watch out for is your own haste to start shooting. It's important, while loading the camcorder, not to force the case, since any misalignment or excess force can warp it, defeating the watertight seal. I learned this the hard way on my second outing, when I hastily jammed the camcorder into the case and unknowingly bent its hinges. After about 10 minutes of snorkeling, I noticed corrosive salt water immersing the camcorder—as well as a bright red exclamation point, which appears in a small window on the rear of the SPK-TRX if water penetrates the case.

As the viewfinder blanked out, I frantically swam toward shore. On the beach, I removed the camcorder and towed it dry, then left it to dry further in the sun. Two hours later, it was working. A month later, the TR81 was still recording videos as good as new. While I don't recommend trying this, Sony deserves credit for building such a robust camcorder.

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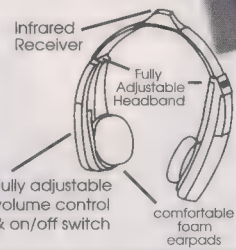
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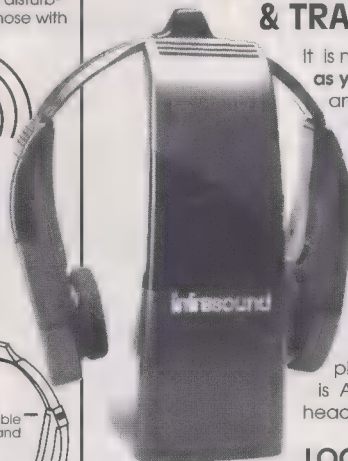
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BUYER BEWARE

Fraudulent phone tricks can cost you money.

Phone fraud tip-offs.

Beware of phone sales tactics with these characteristics:

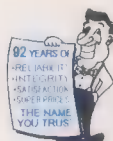
- overemphasizes free merchandise
 - unauthorized dealers
 - pressures you to buy before a deadline
- And remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.*

BUYERS GUIDE

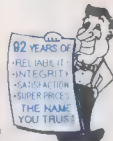
Q. Who can you call and give your credit card number to with confidence?



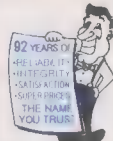
Q. Who is the world's largest camera, electronic and computer department store?



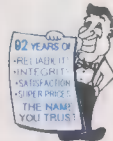
Q. Who has only factory fresh merchandise? Nothing Refurbished!



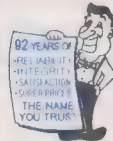
Q. Who has the largest selection of Direct Factory Authorized Brands?



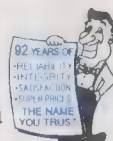
Q. Who can you call for experienced and knowledgeable sales staff?



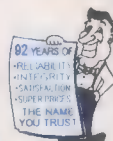
Q. Who guarantees you the lowest purchase price?



Q. Who can you call for prompt and speedy shipment?



Q. Who gives you a 10 day money back guarantee?



Q. They all come and go, but who has been here for 92 years?

ANSWER

TO FIND OUT WHO THIS 92 YEAR OLD RETAIL GIANT IS, TURN TO PAGE 58

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Q & A

BY RODERICK WOODCOCK

Widescreen worries & lens coatings

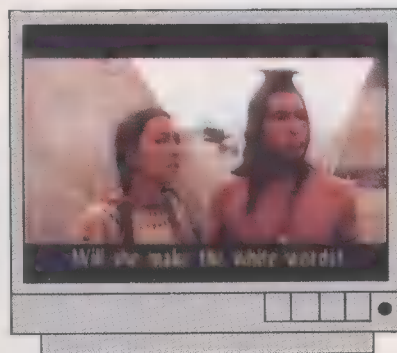
Q I've read that widescreen TV sets will electronically remove the black bands from letterboxed videotapes and laserdiscs during playback. I've also read that some foreign-language tapes and discs use the areas within the black bands to display subtitles.

Won't these subtitles disappear when the black bands are removed? Or do widescreen sets contain electronics that will allow the subtitles to be retained even when the bands are removed?

Paul R. Riley
Lawton, Oklahoma

A Unfortunately, the soon-to-come widescreen TV sets with 16:9 aspect ratios don't offer an easy solution for this problem. Since the subtitles are part of the video image, they will be masked out by the circuitry that enlarges the image to fill wider screens. The only way to see the subtitles is to leave the set in the 4:3 mode, which creates a "windowboxing" effect, or black bars on top and bottom

Screen Trims: Some letterboxed laserdiscs, like *Dances With Wolves*, include subtitles in the black bars (top). Future widescreen TV sets (bottom) will cut off these subtitles.



as well as on both sides.

One possible solution for future discs would be to include a digital equivalent of the text in each subtitle, allowing it to be superimposed over the image area on widescreen sets, or displayed within the black bands for those with regular sets.

It's not as pleasing to the eye to have subtitles cover part of the image, but for widescreen movies viewed on this new generation of TV sets, there's no other solution, apart from dubbing the dialog.

Q I've noticed that the lenses of some camcorders have a purplish tint, while some others have an orange tint. What's the difference? Is one better than the other?

Jerry Clark
Detroit, Michigan

A Whether for a still camera, a movie camera, binoculars or a camcorder, any complex optical system employs coated optics to improve light transmission. Different kinds of coating have been used, including magnesium (purple) and amber (orange). Each has its own advantages. The coating selected depends on the lens itself. Both work well and neither is necessarily better.

It's because of the coating that camera lenses have to be kept clean and, when they do get dirty, they should be cleaned very carefully. Examine the lens under a good light and blow off any loose dust with air from a blower brush. Follow by cleaning with a piece of lens tissue rolled into a swab and moistened with a touch of lens cleaning fluid. And protecting the lens with a neutral skylight or UV filter is inexpensive insurance against dust or dirt degrading image quality in the first place.

continued on page 92

Video Magazine welcomes your questions. Please include a phone number, but not a return envelope as the volume of mail does not permit replies. All letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address queries to Q & A, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001.

N·E·W PRODUCTS

BY BRIAN CLARK

*Minolta delivers
first two-chip
consumer camcorder.*

▼ TIMESHIFTER'S DREAM

Sony makes a splash by blending programming and editing features into a VHS hi-

fi stereo VCR. For timeshifters, the SLV-696HF (\$649) incorporates Gemstar's VCR Plus programming system, while editing features include a flying erase head, audio/video insert editing, Control S input and front-panel inputs. Another model, the SLV-595HF (\$595), has the programming features without the editing extras.



▼ IN LIVING COLOR

The 1991 VIVA-winning Fuji F60WIDE 8mm camcorder featured a wide-angle adapter lens that slid into place. The new F122SW (\$1,600) retains that feature, increases the zoom range from 8x to 12x and adds a color LCD viewfinder.



► FIRST 2-CCD CAMCORDER

Minolta's Pro 8-918 Hi8 camcorder (\$2,705) marks another step in the evolution of consumer camcorders. Until now, two-CCD cameras have been larger professional models. The Pro 8-918 uses two half-inch, 410,000-pixel CCDs, and checks in with a compact weight of 2.5 pounds to boot. Using two chips produces more accurate color separation and greater color saturation. Additional features include AFM hi-fi stereo sound, audio/video dubbing, frame advance, a flying erase head, manual iris control and a character generator. A 5x telephoto and a 0.65x wide-angle lens are available as accessories.



▼ TAKING THE DOLBY DIVE

Two manufacturers, Sherwood and Carver, are introducing their first receivers with the Dolby Pro-Logic surround system. Sherwood's RV-6010R offers a choice of four surround modes. Pre-out/main-in jacks for each of the five amplifiers increase the unit's flexibility. Independent video switching permits recording three video sources simultaneously. The receiver is offered as the RV-6010R with a unified remote (\$450), or as the RV-6010RS with a programmable remote (\$500). The Carver HR-895's four surround modes include simulated stereo for mono source material. This heavyweight performer, priced at \$1,200, has seven audio, four composite video and three S-video inputs. The front video input also accommodates S-video. A second remote and infrared receiver are supplied for multiroom use.



BY MARTIN LEVINE

HOW TO BUY A HOME THEATER

A strategy for winning the most demanding & costly video challenge you'll ever accept.



At first David Witt, an Atlanta real-estate developer, couldn't quite describe what it was he really wanted when he called Drew Bardagjy, a noted home theater installer, also based in the bustling capital of the new South. Witt's notion of some kind of entertainment room with ■ big-screen TV set was so hazy the term "home theater" never even came to mind. But a home theater is what Bardagjy ultimately designed. And while Witt initially omitted some elements that normally characterize home theaters, now that he and his three teen-age kids have had a taste of the experience, Witt plans to add surround sound and a few other finishing touches.

"It looks just like ■ movie screen," says Witt of his new 84-inch, custom-built Optics screen, which displays images from a Sony video projector. "People come down at night and they just can't believe it."

The uncertain path Witt followed from a vague yearning toward a full-blown home theater, for about \$25,000 so far, illustrates the unpredictable nature of home theater shopping. What you get isn't always what you expect and, as any Hollywood producer knows, the unexpected always costs more.

This is a sobering thought when you consider that elaborate home theater systems, with faithful surround-sound reproduction, can easily push past \$30,000—even past \$100,000 with extensive custom cabinetry and room modifications. But it need not be a discouraging thought. Home theaters can also be assembled for less. Moreover, there's a growing corps of design and installation specialists, and harnessing their skills should be part of your plan.

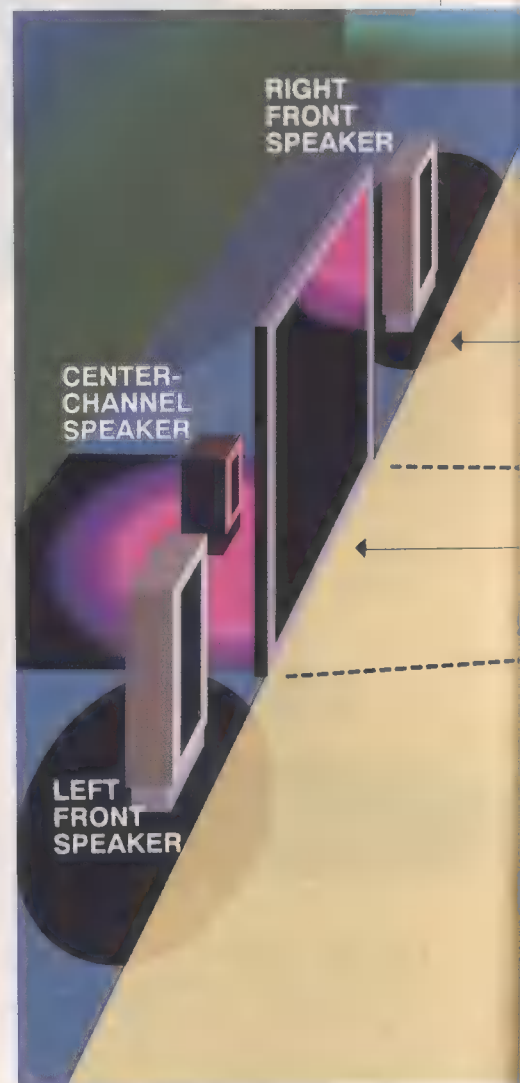
How? That's what we're going to talk about: How best to approach the challenge of putting together a home theater. Even working with an installer, you need to bring a lot to the job because the demands of choosing compo-

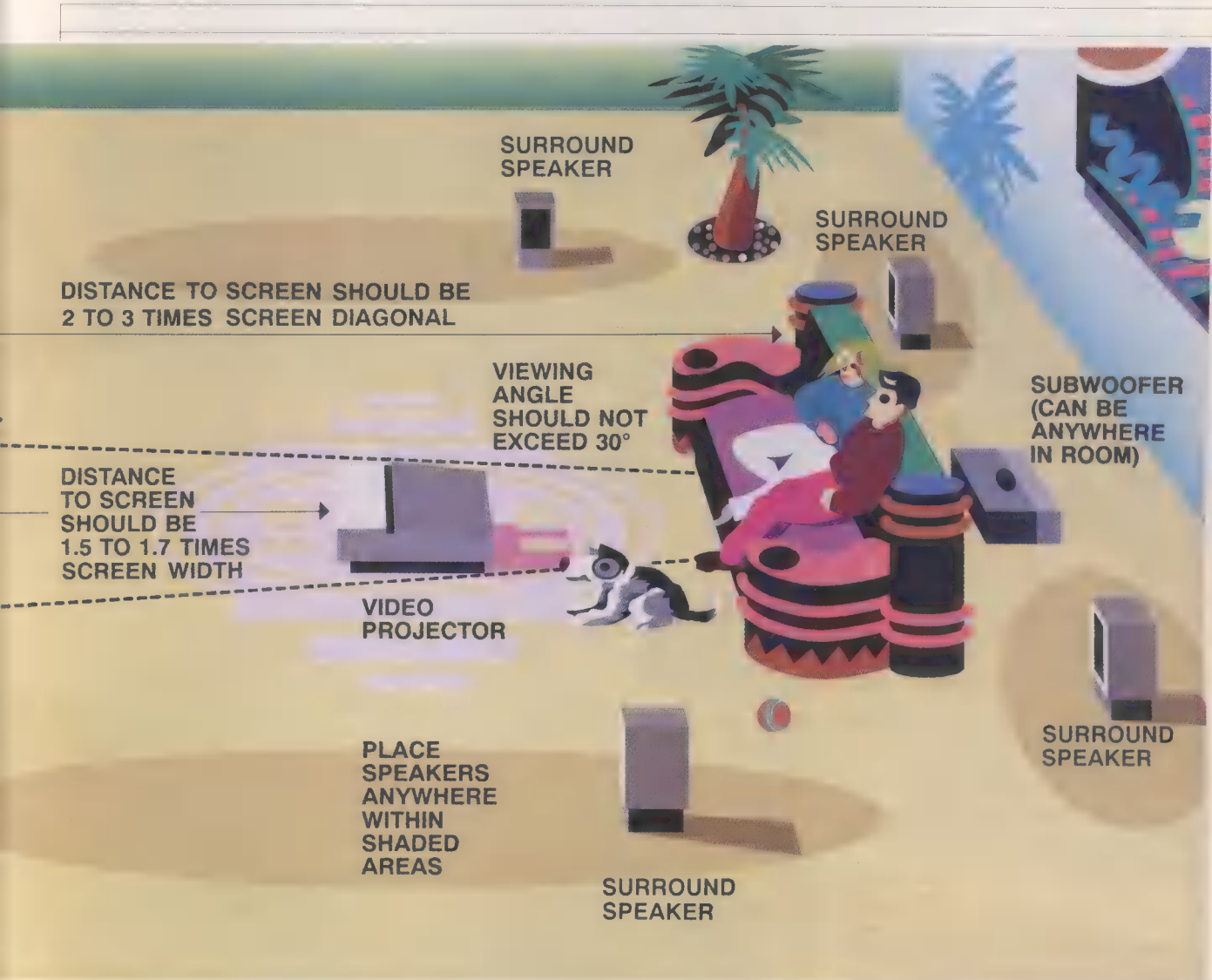
nents, ordering room alterations and developing a budget can be daunting. We're going to give you some straightforward advice to help you cut through the confusion, advice about working with installers, about two unique shortcuts to full-scale theaters (see "JBL's Ultimate Option" and "Instant Movie Palace") and some basic tips about home theater speakers, screens and the rooms you'll put them in.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Far more than most people realize, choosing projectors, screens and audio amplifiers is secondary to two more important objectives: deciding on the type of viewing experience you really want and finding someone who can translate your yearnings into a suitable system. For example:

Do you want the best possible environment for movies? Or are you really after a multipurpose media room?

Do you want to re-create a movie palace remembered from childhood? Or would an unobtrusive system that disap-





pears between screenings make more sense?

Are you prepared to sacrifice part of your backyard to a new room built to accommodate all this equipment? Or can

an existing room meet your needs? With or without renovation?

Let's start with a fundamental question. Should you do it yourself or work with an installer? Some people love

drawing up plans, hauling lumber and plugging in the circular saw. And anyone with a reasonable grasp of home electronics can plug in a rear-screen projection TV set, patch components together

5 TIPS FOR CHOOSING SPEAKERS

Directionality counts for front speakers. Speakers that reflect sound off walls and floors may work well for listening to music, but are anathema to home theater. The left and right front speakers and the center-channel speakers should, as do THX speakers, focus the sound straight out at the listener for realistic imaging.

Flat response, good power handling and a wide dynamic range are important. Movie soundtracks often shift from soft whispers to loud explosions in an instant, and your speakers better be able to handle the quick surges in power and transients.

Any speaker placed close to a TV set should be magnetically shielded. Speakers sold for center-channel use as

well as many others marketed as audio/video products usually are, but it pays to check.

Consider the room environment. Are you looking for a hideaway system? Do you want to keep equipment away from young hands? Many manufacturers offer speakers that can be built into walls. While bookshelf designs can be built into cabinets or suspended off the floor, this can also alter their performance, and not necessarily for the better.

No one in the room should hear sounds directly from the surround speakers. In contrast to the role of front speakers, the surround-sound speakers should radiate reflected patterns. The idea is to create a swirling, three-dimensional effect.

—ML

HOME THEATER

and even adjust a basic surround-sound processor. The theater system this kind of effort leads to need not cost more than \$10,000 and will almost certainly deliver big-screen enjoyment and palpable surround sound.

But a rear-screen system limits picture size. And while a Dolby Pro-Logic surround-sound decoder and a basic array of five speakers may impress the neighbors, it might not reproduce the sonic effects envisioned by the movie's director.

A more elaborate system, which comes closer to reproducing the total experience moviemakers struggle to create, almost demands a professional installer, someone who knows all the latest equipment and which pieces work best together in particular settings. "It's essential, especially in the upper price ranges," says Mike Aguilar, vice president of Technics, a major supplier of surround-sound decoders and other audio/video components.

Not surprisingly, his view is echoed by most installers. "I'm trying to create an environment that faithfully reproduces what the director intended," says Ferdinand Steyer, founder of F. Steyer Design, a home theater design firm based in Greenwich, Connecticut. "Directors go through incredible pains to create good soundtracks. I saw a screening of *Backdraft* at Lucasfilm's Skywalker Ranch and the soundtrack was amazing. Later, when I went to see *Backdraft* at what I thought was one of the



All in One: Synthesis One includes a projector, surround speakers, amps and processing circuitry.

JBL's Ultimate Option-- Synthesis One

There are two conventional ways to assemble home theater components: Choose them yourself (which can be both fun and nerve-wracking) or work with an installer who chooses them for you. Now, JBL, a leading supplier of commercial speaker systems, is offering a third way—an ensemble of components it describes as the first complete packaged home theater system. Choosing JBL's Synthesis One simply eliminates many of the other component decisions you would otherwise have to make, without sacrificing quality.

You'll still need video sources—a VCR or a laserdisc player—but little else. Synthesis One includes a data-grade video projector, a video controller, a screen, two 18-inch subwoofers, signal processing equipment and a wall-shaking 1,600 watts of amplification. Of course, at a suggested price of \$47,900, plus installation costs, Synthesis One should be virtually complete. (For those with

continued on page 94

best movie theaters in Manhattan—with a six-track Dolby sound system—it was just flat. A good home theater system should provide a better experience than even the better movie theaters."

But what is a home theater anyway? While definitions vary, three elements are essential:

- A large screen. Front projectors are preferable since they can throw the im-

5 TIPS FOR DECORATING YOUR HOME THEATER

Almost anything goes as long as it doesn't detract from system performance. An art deco movie palace? A minimalist box? Either's fine, if it's what you want. There are no hard and fast rules for decorating a home theater.

◆ Beware of ambient lighting. Two-piece projection monitors are helpless in the face of strong ambient lighting. While this isn't a problem at night, you might want to use the room during the day. And if it gets strong sunlight and the curtains are sheer, you may have a problem.

◆ If you can't find the right couch and chairs, consider custom furniture. If theater-type seats leave you cold, there are furniture designs that maximize the number of

people who can be seated in the audio/visual sweet spots—within a 15-degree angle to the screen. Anything more acute will affect brightness and color accuracy.

◆ Go easy on sound-absorbing materials. If the room is acoustically "dead"—that is, if sound is absorbed rather than reflected by the walls, ceiling and floor—the surround-sound effects will suffer.

◆ A moderately rectangular room is better than long and narrow. Long, narrow rooms don't give installers enough room to space the speakers properly and to work in enough good seating. For best acoustics, choose a room in which the ceiling is about two-thirds the width of the room.

—ML

age sizes that give home theaters real impact, although rear-screen projectors will do a fine job on a smaller scale. The American Society of Interior Designers recommends screens from six to 10 feet, measured diagonally.

● **High-quality surround sound.** There are plenty of ways to achieve this, although all will include Dolby Pro-Logic surround-sound decoding and an array of front and side or rear speakers with sufficient amplification for the room they're being used in.

● **Lighting controls.** Sure you can watch a movie with daylight leaking through the windows, but why should you? A room with the ability to go completely dark heightens the impact of any movie you're watching, and completes the illusion of enjoying it in a private theater.

Imagine capturing the magic of Hollywood, as envisioned by a movie's director, and bringing it home. No scratchy prints, no muddy sound, and speakers sturdy enough to revel in the explosive soundtracks of contemporary action films. "Home theater isn't about a specific component or screen size," says Steyer. "It's about realizing a concept and an environment, and integrating that into your home."



Premier Attraction: From theater seats to gilded capitals, what you see is what you get.

Instant Movie Palace

What happens when the home theater you'd like to install seems too tame for the lavish settings your childhood memories still inspire? It may be time to explore the work of Theatre Design Associates, a unique firm that offers a variety of custom interiors—all crafted to recall the grand picture palaces that were once as much a part of the romance of moviegoing as the films themselves.

Founded by former film director Theo Kalomirakis, the company offers a line of Dream Palace interiors in opulent "Classic," "Traditional" and "Art Deco" styles, from about \$13,000 to \$57,000 for rooms as large as 22 by 34 feet. These are real theater environments, right down to plush, red theater-style seats. If your budget allows, you can include a working marquee, poster

continued on page 92

Like other top installers, Steyer begins by interviewing his clients, drawing them out as they begin to articulate the emotions and desires that made them seek him in the first place. "My job is to

find out what the customer wants, then deliver it." Nailing down a concrete vision from hazy musings is part of the installer's job.

continued on page 90

5 TIPS FOR PICKING THE PERFECT PROJECTION SCREEN

Go for the biggest screen you can work into your budget and room. This is a home theater, after all—not just a place to watch TV. A common complaint among people who have installed a home theater is, "I should have gotten a bigger screen." It may look huge at first, but it will seem to shrink with time.

Front or rear projection? Rear-projection sets outperform front projection in bright light, but are limited in size. Remember that if your room is large enough, you can take a two-piece system and mount the projector behind the screen.

Screen "gain" is important, but shouldn't override other considerations. A high-gain screen, with its greater ability to reflect light, will improve performance if you plan to keep some lights on. But many installers opt for flat matte white screens because they offer performance equivalent to a flat response loudspeaker; what the moviemaker envisioned is what you see on the screen. And high-gain screens, especially beaded designs, tend to have

hot spots and a rapid drop-off in performance for anyone seated at a sharp angle to the screen—although installers say some recent entries in the 1.5 to 2.1 gain range offer performance close to flat matte white.

Will your screen roll, hang or slip away? The size and design you choose will be affected by how the screen will be installed. Essentially, there are three choices: a screen that rolls up and down as needed, particularly handy for theater rooms that serve more than one function; hide-away screens that fit inside custom cabinetry with doors that swing or roll open, or a screen that is always open and in view. If you have small children who love crayons, you may want to hide the screen.

Is it time for 16:9? The widescreen aspect ratio of HDTV was born in the movie theater. Now, with more widescreen discs and tapes available than ever, and more on the way, it might be wise to plan a system that can be adapted for widescreen viewing. Discuss the issue with your installer.

—ML

BY RON GOLDBERG

ACCESSORIES

A new array of lights, mics and more helps home shooters fire up flat videos.



The lights have come up on another, shall we say, uninspired homemade video. By now, the alibis have a familiar ring: "There just wasn't enough light for that shot," "the wind really messed up the sound," or some similar variation on these crestfallen themes. Your friends have heard it all before, and forgive you once again. However, they're losing patience with these amateurish videos, and frankly, so are you.

The difference between what they're seeing and what they want to see is a matter of production value. Steady camera work, proper exposure and intelligible sound are the least that an audience expects from any video. All this can be simple, once it's understood that production value is a matter of both tools and technique. There's no digital substitute for knowing what to do.

More often than not, though, good technique can be substantially bolstered by the right tools. Camcorders are pretty much self-sufficient in that they can deliver acceptable footage under most shooting conditions. But using the right accessories will produce better work and make the job easier as well. Good accessories are designed to enhance the videographer's efficiency and creativity, and when used properly, will have an ex-

tremely noticeable impact on both.

And they're a bargain, too. We've listed our favorite accessories below at list price, but most are available at much lower street prices.

LEGS TO STAND ON

Camcorders get smaller every year, but no matter what the size, holding one up to your eye for an extended period of time is a clear invitation to shaky footage. The answer to this pervasive problem is to use a camcorder support, the most popular being the trusty tripod. Unlike a unit designed for still cameras, a video tripod gives you flexibility of motion for pans, tilts and elevations. The best feature a fluid head, which makes for silky-smooth movement. Some even come with a dolly, a set of wheels that makes the tripod mobile.

Picking the right tripod is largely a matter of taste. Our favorites include the Slik 504 QF, a \$189 fluid-head model weighing in at a mere 5-1/4 pounds; Thomson's AC040, a \$169 fluid-head model with soft click stops for precise pans and tilts; and the \$199 Bilora Pro930, which offers left- or right-handed panning and a shock-absorbing center column to protect the camcorder.

More portable supports can also do a great job of curing the shakes. For example, the \$59 Gold Coast GT-B bracket

combines a shoulder mount and a chest brace for hands-free operation. Tristar offers a \$165 car-mounting camera support called the 360 CPL CaMobilia, which turns your automobile into Robodolly.

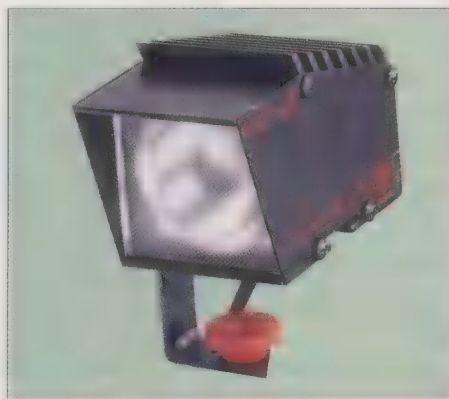
The Steadicam JR is a downsized version of the professional Steadicam that won an Oscar for technical achievement. Using a patented gimbal-based handle, the \$595 Steadicam JR is an amazingly potent stabilizing device. A high-contrast LCD monitor lets you keep the camcorder on target. You can run, jump and jostle the camera through crowds and still come up with rock-steady footage. Ask any Hollywood cinematographer, if you don't believe us.

One of the more unusual supports, to say the least, is the Action Boom (from \$249) by Classic Video Products. A combination stabilizer/boom mount, the unit can keep a camcorder steady through a dizzying variety of movements, including 360-degree revolutions, and ground-

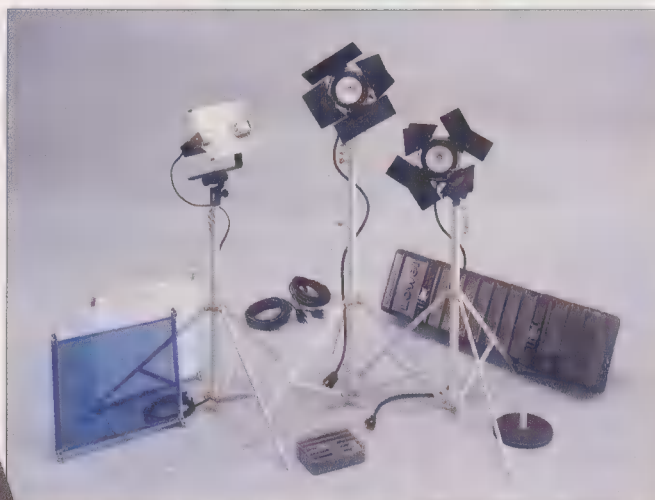
AFTER THE FACT



Mod Monitor:
Classic Video Products' Action Boom uses a head-mounted LCD monitor that allows users to follow action no matter what the camcorder's position.



Lifetime Light:
Cool-Lux's 35-watt Micro-Lux camcorder light carries a lifetime warranty on both the bulb and the fixture.



Shining Bright:
Lowel's AC-powered \$865 Intro-kit includes three lights and all the accessories serious shooters need.

ACCESSORIES

level and overhead shots. A head- or chest-mount LCD monitor keeps your eye on the action, and the unit can be attached to a tripod for more special effects. Be prepared to experiment, though—it's a complicated device and the instructions are sketchy.

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Now that the camcorder is steady, the emphasis shifts to the two cardinal points of video input, lens and eyepiece. What is actually seen through the viewfinder obviously has great bearing on what ends up on tape. Unfortunately, it's difficult to follow or direct action when a camcorder is mashed against the eye, especially for those who wear glasses. The Citizen M329 monitor solves this problem admirably. A \$189, full-color LCD unit with a 2.9-inch screen, the five-ounce M329 clips onto the camcorder for a "real world" look at incoming footage. An optional platform lets the Citizen double as a playback monitor, a sun shield makes it visible in the brightest light, and a tuner that turns the M329 into a mini TV set is also available.

All too often, a camcorder's lens is regarded as unchangeable. Outside of zooming and manual focus, few videographers pay it much mind. This is a shame, because altering the lens with an adapter can solve problems and open up new creative possibilities.

Lens adapters (also called converters) are optical devices which screw onto camcorder lenses. They come in various focal lengths, from fish-eye wide-angle to extreme telephoto. A 5x lens adapter increases focal length by a magnitude of five; when used with a 10x zoom lens, total magnification will be a whopping 50x at the extreme telephoto position. Conversely, a wide-angle adapter will reduce the focal length, making wide shots even wider.

There are some caveats to the adapter approach. Not all lens adapters work with camcorder autofocus mechanisms, and some do so only if the camcorder uses a TTL focusing system. As a result, you may have to use manual focus. In addition, a lens adapter usually cuts down on the light entering the camcorder. In general, converters are



Hot Shots: Top photo, clockwise—Samson's MR-1 handheld wireless mic, Ambico's V-0880 video light, Sunpak's Readylight 20, Samson's MR-1 lavalier wireless mic and receiver, Azden's Cam-3 mixer, a Lenmar flip-lens wide-angle/telephoto converter, and Minolta wide-angle and telephoto adapters. Bottom photo, left to right—Slik's 504 QF tripod, Classic Video Products' Action Boom and Bilora's Pro930 tripod.

best suited for exterior shoots, where there's plenty of light and room for the extended telephoto capabilities.

The more popular brands include Sigma, Tokina, Vivitar and Ambico. The better units feature all-glass elements. Some perform double duty by flipping between wide-angle and telephoto, or even zoomable settings. A good 2x converter runs between \$50 and \$125, with the costlier units sporting anti-glare coatings and glass elements. A wide-angle converter, identified by a fractional magnification like 0.8x or lower, runs from \$60 to \$100. When buying

either of these accessories, remember that the adapter mount has to be the same size as the filter diameter of the camcorder lens.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Although most camcorders do a fine job of capturing both light and sound, controlling illumination not only improves picture quality, but allows for some real creativity—painting with light, if you will.

The most utilitarian way of controlling light is by way of an accessory light. These mini lights (usually between 10

I Can See Clearly Now:
With Citizen's M329 LCD monitor, a videographer can frame shots more accurately, while keeping a comfortable distance from the camcorder.



and 30 watts) typically clip onto an accessory shoe and run off a camcorder-type rechargeable battery. The advantage here is that with very little extra weight or bother, ample illumination is only a button away.

Among the more interesting offerings in this category is Sunpak's \$259 Auto CV300, a shoe-mounted unit that provides total or fill-in lighting. When set to automatic operation, the Auto CV300's sensor measures ambient light and blends in electronic light for a more balanced picture. In manual mode, the unit fires 30 watts of straight or diffused illumination. Sima offers a similar model, the \$114 SL-4 Sensorlight.

Cool-Lux's \$80 35-watt Micro-Lux employs the same rugged construction that has made the company's Mini-Cool light standard equipment on Space Shuttle missions. Both the fixture and the lamp carry a lifetime warranty. Another noteworthy clip-on light is Sunpak's \$80 ReadyLight 20, a compact, convenient and affordable 20-watt unit that comes with a battery and a recharger.

Although a clip-on light might seem the most expedient way of illuminating a shoot, it does have drawbacks. For example, direct lighting tends to produce harsh, unflattering pictures. Imagine a 50-watt spotlight in your face while the camcorder's running and you'll get the message. Some of the more versatile lights offer a tiltable head for bounce lighting. This technique reflects light off the ceiling, and provides soft, even illumination. In a pinch, simply removing



Shake It Up: Cinema Products' Steadicam JR lets users shoot steady footage under most conditions.

the light from the camcorder and holding it off to the side as you shoot will deliver similar results.

Small lights in the 10- to 30-watt range are fine for close shooting, but for more demanding applications, you need a more powerful accessory light or a dedicated lighting kit. The advantage of the former is that it's as convenient as the smaller clip lights. For example, Hahnel's Pro Zoom (\$230 with battery) is a 50-watt battery-powered model, and the \$50 Ambico V-1077 provides 50 watts on DC and 150 watts when running on AC current.

But as convenient as clip lights are, tricky lighting situations and creative effects are best served by a true lighting system. These will typically include a

flood light for overall illumination, a spot light for focused work and a smaller light for backlighting or highlights. Several manufacturers offer lightweight systems designed for serious video and film use. Lowel offers the Intro-kit (\$865), a versatile and complete AC-powered system that includes a broad light and two spots, as well as stands, barn doors, gels and a carry bag. Lighting kits ranging from simple units that plug into the wall to elaborate setups requiring an outboard DC-regulated power supply are also available from Smith-Victor, Cool-Lux and many others.

SOUNDING BETTER

Audio is one of the most crucial, yet overlooked qualities of good home video. Poorly reproduced dialog, excessive ambient noise and the videographer's spoken directions leaking onto the soundtrack greatly diminish the impact of even the most visually astounding productions. The keys to better audio are good microphone technique and proper mixing.

Most camcorders have a unidirectional microphone, which picks up sound from the front and sides, while rejecting sound from the rear. This position is good, but limited. Zooming in on a distant subject might bring it closer visually, but the microphone is still far away. Using an external mic placed close to the subject will improve matters considerably. Most camcorders have an external mic jack, and many have a DC output jack for microphones with built-in preamps.

One of the more popular trends is the use of wireless microphone systems. These broadcast on VHF frequencies, and send clear audio back to the camcorder from as far as several hundred feet. Nady has been especially active on this front, offering the 151 VR system with a choice of either a wireless handheld mic (model 151 VRHT, \$250) or a clip-on lavalier (model 151 VRLT, \$200). Samson's MR-1 wireless system, ranging from \$464 for a lavalier mic system to \$540 for a handheld system, uses dbx noise reduction and adjustable background squelching, along with selectable impedance matching for perfect microphone-to-camcorder compatibility.

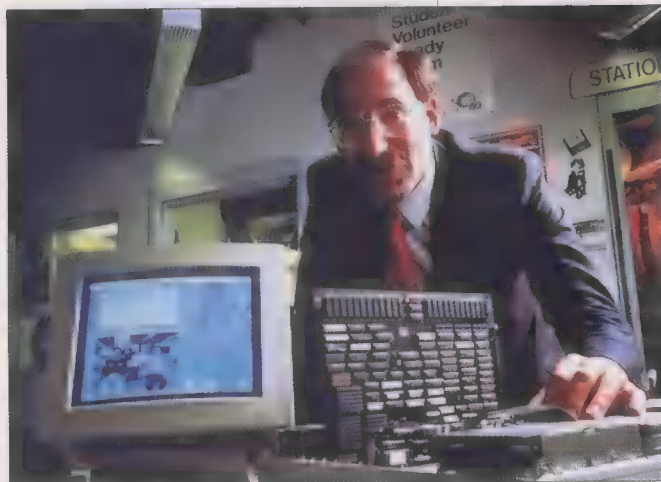
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BY FRANK BEACHAM

TV ALCHEMISTS

How an MIT think tank is breaking barriers to build a startling vision of TV's future.

Ready to Merge:
Media Lab Associate Director Andrew Lippman, a leading advocate for the merger of TV and computing technologies, with an interactive city guide program.



The picture on the screen is familiar, yet strange. The super high-definition monitor (2,000 lines of resolution) is displaying a panoramic, three-dimensional image of the living room set from *I Love Lucy*. Nearby, a computer operator clicks on his mouse, and Lucy and Ethel suddenly appear on the set. As a group of visitors gasps in astonishment, the actors are given computer-generated movements and new camera shots are chosen. Scene by scene, the program is dissected and reassembled in ways never imagined by the show's original director.

Leaning against the screen in the "computer garden" of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's famed Media Lab, associate director Andrew Lippman announces that we have just witnessed a demonstration of "structural video." A computer using 3-D design software has been programmed to take apart, alter and reassemble TV programs and movies. Here, the computer has just created a full 3-D model of the *I Love Lucy* set from the fragmentary glimpses seen in a typical episode, then adjusted it for

widescreen, high-resolution display.

The computer can also locate actors within the original tape and cut and paste them onto the set in new ways dictated by the computer operator. In this manner, it may be possible not only to create widescreen versions of *I Love Lucy* and other vintage programs, but to increase

their resolution beyond that provided by the original program source.

Structural video is just one of the startling projects under way at the Media Lab, one of the world's leading centers for advanced media research. Founded in 1985, the lab is a melting pot where academia and industry meet to experiment with the future of television, film, computing and related technologies. Its talent pool has included dozens of the country's brightest thinkers and tinkerers, and its corporate sponsors, from Apple Computer to Warner Bros., represent a virtual *Who's Who* of the media establishment.

With nearly 120 researchers divided into a dozen working groups, the lab has won or applied for more than two dozen patents, some involving consumer video applications—like a system for altering broadcast signals to prevent home VCRs from recording pay-per-view events, and the development of "micons," which are essentially film clips stored on discs, an important tool in a broader effort to merge television and computer technologies.

While the lab's work has yielded some products, its primary mission is research. And now that its years of experimentation on the merging of TV and computing are nearing commercial viability, the subject has become the focal point of numerous Media Lab projects.

For example, its researchers use the



LUCY IN THE FUTURE.
Researchers display
showing how a com-
puter might reassemble
Lucy. Lucy hit a high-
resolution, widescreen
TV. First, it assembles
a full view of the set
by consolidating par-
tial views (top row)
seen during an ap-
proach. Then it strips
Lucy and Emma from
the screen and adds
them to the reassembled
set, with new camera
movements & effects.

phrase "scalable video" to describe the concept that would permit a broadcast signal to support everything from conventional TV to a variety of HDTV systems. In scalable or variable data-rate television (a goal the lab now considers more important than higher resolution), the aspect ratio, the number of frames per second and the number of scan lines can be adjusted to suit the requirements of an individual movie, a TV receiver or a viewer's preferences.

These and other picture characteristics, shaped as a digital data stream, would be determined on the fly as the images are transmitted and used. "In a scalable system, one requires less bandwidth for a smaller image," explains Lippman. "As more bits are processed, the image becomes clearer or larger, at the recipient's discretion."

Scaling a video signal permits it to be displayed at a variety of screen sizes. This, in turn, would allow TV images to be measured in lines per inch, like computers, instead of lines per screen. Moreover, "since a scalable signal can be decoded at a variety of resolutions and costs, broadcasters and consumers alike

can invest in as much definition as they wish," Lippman adds. "In five years, I'm hoping the videophile will have as much quality as he wants for the money he wants to spend. For 50 cents, he gets to see a small picture; for \$1, he gets to see the movie in CinemaScope. Digital vid-

eo can let us build a continuum where we can have a range of quality."

Looking further into the future, the lab foresees "model-based video," in which a TV receiver would generate programs using a computer-driven model processing images from a cameralike



Reinventing Lucy: Researcher analyzes *Lucy* set elements on a monitor with 2,000 lines of resolution.

ALCHEMISTS

device. "In this manner you could view, for example, a baseball game from the perspective of the ball," reads a Media Lab manifesto. In the longer term, "little holographic baseball players will run around your living room hitting and catching a quarter-inch holographic ball."

BEYOND HDTV

If this seems like pie in the sky, consider the impact the Media Lab is already having on the development of digital television, in part by influencing policy deliberations within such key bodies as the Federal Communications Commission, the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers and the International Standards Organization.

"What's happened in the last couple



50Hz

60Hz



24Hz

Open Sesame: Onscreen display with full-motion images from three different sources shows how open-architecture TV set could eliminate barriers among video standards that are now incompatible.

of years should be a matter of optimism for people in television," FCC Chairman Alfred Sikes recently said. "We are going from the initial promise of better video and audio to the potential, through digital applications, for a lot of new products." Sikes also said that the FCC's selection process for an American HDTV system now includes among its criteria "the characteristics of scalability,

extensibility and interoperability."

These last three words, admittedly ■ mouthful, were virtually coined at the Media Lab. As the lab uses the term, extensibility refers to the ability of a TV system to operate using any of several display technologies, including high-resolution displays still to be developed. Interoperability refers to the ability of a TV system to function at any frame rate. The use of the terms by Sikes indicates the level of the Media Lab's influence, while the lab's work in realizing these concepts offers important glimpses into the future of television.

A significant part of this future may involve open-architecture television, the subject of another key Media Lab project. Using this technology, the TV image is made to be independent of line and frame rates. In an open-architecture system, ■ TV receiver would be able to display and mix pictures from HDTV equipment, film cameras or any of the world's major broadcast standards (NTSC, PAL and SECAM) using any display standard at frame rates ranging from 24 to 100 per second.

Open-architecture television uses processing that analyzes the TV signal in terms of its vertical, horizontal and temporal frequencies. The frequencies are packaged according to the content of the video image.

"For example, if I aim my camera at a still scene, there is no high temporal energy because nothing in the scene is changing," Lippman explains. "If I aim at a movie, the frame rate [for an open-architecture TV] is low—24 a second—but the vertical and horizontal frequencies are extremely high because movies are extremely clear. If I aim at a sporting event, the TV's frame rate goes up to 30—the rate for conventional TV—but vertical resolution drops because we are not sensitive to detail if it's moving too

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Video Unleashed

The Media Lab is involved in exotic research projects, ranging from education to music. But many deal with the future of consumer video, including experiments in:

- **Holographic Video.** By improving the computational speed for holographic images, research led by Professor Stephen A. Benton makes it possible to create high-definition video holograms.

- **Audio and Listening Environments.** Experiments, supervised by Professor Barry Vercoe, hold out the promise of shifting the mixing and production of TV audio from studio consoles to home receivers. The lab is also working with "synthetic spaces" that would electronically enhance a room's natural ambience through an active boundary system of microphones and speakers. The technique uses a new class of flat reverberators running on a high-speed digital audio processor. The goal is to separate a room's acoustics from its architecture.

- **Storyteller Systems.** In a project headed by Professors Kenneth Haase and Glorianna Davenport, computers are programmed to use recorded video, sound and text to produce stories customized to match the viewers' needs and interests.

- **Desktop Movies.** Can filmmaking be computerized? One project, led by Media Lab Associate Director Andrew Lippman, involves programming a computer to make movies automatically, drawing on a memory bank of archetypal images, including those for actors and backgrounds.

—FB



Micon Maven: Professor Glorianna Davenport with screens showing "micons"—film clips stored for storytelling purposes.



BY STAN PINKWAS

Not all home theaters are created equal, but not all need to be. A small room and a modest budget are enough to help anyone watch movies in style, even when it involves retaining a design professional to set up the system. A recent home theater created for a condominium in Rancho Mirage, California, demonstrates just what's possible.

The room was 12 by 18 feet and the budget was \$10,000. The goal was a full theater system, with a big screen, surround sound and appropriate video and audio sources. Vincent Taylor, president of V. Frederick International of Palm Desert, California, met the challenge by basing his design around Philips' WallVision system, a family of home theater components created to simplify installation and work well in a variety of configurations.

The centerpiece was a 52-inch WallVision rear-projection TV set, which was mounted approximately in the center of the system's wall, and protected by a screen-size filter that enhances the set's picture by improving contrast and reducing scan lines. The set's features include 50-watt Dolby Pro-Logic surround sound.

The main equipment stack rests to the right of the TV set in one of two matching WallVision cabinets. It includes a Carver laserdisc player, the client's old Akai VCR, a Hafler amp and a Proton 3000 Combo Unit, which houses

a CD player, an auto-reverse cassette deck and a tuner. The system is also wired for cable and to accept SkyPix's direct-broadcast transmissions when they become available. To the set's left, Taylor installed a storage cabinet for videotapes, laserdiscs and CDs.

The TV set, two flanking speakers and the cabinets are all flush with the wall and intrude backward into a space previously occupied by a closet and a laundry. "We took out the closet doors, removed the main support beam from the middle of the closet and ran a false wall across the front," explains Taylor. "For the left cabinet, we pushed back into a small laundry room behind an existing portion of wall. This was a little more difficult."

Inside Job:

The 52-inch monitor and the equipment stack on the right are set into a wall constructed in space formerly occupied by a closet.

Rack Pack:

The system's primary components include a Carver laserdisc player, an Akai VCR and a Proton CD player.



ALL IN A WALL

How a low-budget theater packs big-screen punch

But not too difficult, since the entire installation took just two days, from start to finish. "We've been trying to get the home theater concept to work at a reasonable price," observes Taylor. "This installation was a trial case for us in this price range." In fact, it worked out so well that Taylor, who is also a member of the Custom Electronic Design & Installation Association (see box on page 92), has since installed half a dozen relatively

low-cost home theater systems.

For cost-effective surround sound, Taylor placed NHT 1.8 speakers to the left and right of the TV set and used Hughes Orb speakers, which have a 180-degree dispersement pattern, as side speakers. A center-channel speaker by Philips rests beneath the TV set.

To keep the enclosed system from overheating, Taylor added an air vent

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TAPES & DISCS

N E W R E L E A S E S

FEATURE FILMS

The Rapture

1991. Mimi Rogers; dir. Michael Tolkin. Hi-fi surround, cc. (R) 100 min. \$89.95. New Line.

Los Angeles telephone operator Sharon (Mimi Rogers) seeks relief from her mechanical job by cruising seedy bars, picking up strangers for anonymous sex. But sex can't hide the desperation

faith to the breaking point and beyond.

The Rapture is a film so audacious, it's hard to believe it came out of Hollywood. Writer-director Michael Tolkin neither proselytizes nor attacks religion; instead, this film mirrors his own religious confusion, and aims to prod viewers into examining their beliefs.

His method requires making virtually all audience members uneasy. Religious viewers will be uncomfortable with the film's frank depictions of Sharon's sexual adventures; liberal view-

posed to be.

Despite that eventually fatal flaw, *The Rapture* compels your attention with the heedless intensity of a Sam Fuller movie. (Tolkin, like Fuller, began his career as a journalist.) And Mimi Rogers, who is in almost every frame, is sensational in a very difficult, demanding part. Both director and star took a lot of chances here, and together they have created something unique: a film with the courage of its own confusion.

—M. Faust

Black Robe

1991. Lothaire Bluteau, Aden Young; dir. Bruce Beresford. Hi-fi surround, cc. (R) 101 min. \$94.95. LD (pan-and-scan or letterboxed) \$34.95. Vidmark.

In 1634 Father Laforgue, a Jesuit missionary, sets forth from Quebec toward a remote outpost in Huron country from which nothing has been heard in some time. He is accompanied by members of an Algonquin tribe, the very kind of ignorant souls to whom Laforgue wants to bring the civilizing light of Christianity. As the dangerous journey progresses, Laforgue will realize just who is most ignorant, and his faith will be shaken to the core.

Director Bruce Beresford (*Driving Miss Daisy*) has earned a reputation for films about the collision of differing ways of life, and this one, adapted by Brian Moore from his novel, will enhance it. Beresford makes the most of the gap between the "black robe," as Laforgue is called, and his guides, natural beings who cannot comprehend his mission and don't much care for a heaven without sex, hunting or tobacco. Nothing is overstated—not even the awesome scenery—so as not to overwhelm the real drama, which lies in Laforgue's effort to reconcile his orthodox beliefs with the realities of the wilderness. Lothaire Bluteau suggests all of Laforgue's



Religious Experience: Mimi Rogers explores one of several alternative lifestyles in *The Rapture*.

she feels over the growing pain and emptiness in her life.

On the verge of suicide, Sharon has a religious revelation. She joins a sect of fundamentalist Christians, marries and raises a child. She is happy for a few years, until another revelation leads her to an Abraham-like test that strains her

ers may be surprised by its non-judgmental, even sympathetic tone toward religious beliefs usually depicted as fanatical. And, after the careful ambiguity of most of *The Rapture*, everyone will be surprised by the ending. Not only are we left without any answers, we're even unsure about what the questions are sup-

EDITOR'S CHOICE

by

kenneth korman

complexity with a minimum of effort, and the cast as a whole is remarkably subtle.

Black Robe is an unusually cerebral adventure film. As such, it engages the mind more than the heart. But it does so most thoroughly. —Sol Louis Siegel

Billy Bathgate

1991. Dustin Hoffman, Nicole Kidman, Loren Dean, Bruce Willis; dir. Robert Benton. Hi-fi surround, cc. (R) 107 min. \$92.95. Touchstone.

Gangster flicks are back in style, with everything from the dismal *Mobsters* to the riveting *Goodfellas* commemorating bad guys. Largely forgotten in the



Going Dutch: Dustin Hoffman (center) plays the infamous gangster in the overlooked *Billy Bathgate*.

wake of *Bugsy*, *Billy Bathgate* deserved better. Despite a disappointing box-office and rumors of production problems, director Robert Benton's adaptation of E.L. Doctorow's novel delivers a few thrills, thanks to a strong cast.

Similar in structure to *Goodfellas*, the melodrama follows young Billy (Loren Dean) as he joins a Depression-era gang on the wane. But while Big Apple crimelord Dutch Schultz (Dustin Hoffman) may be fading, he's hardly defeated: Facing a racketeering trial, the don has the venue moved to the country, where he embraces the locals, ensuring a favorable verdict. Behind closed doors, Dutch tends to unleash his vicious temper, committing murder in a spontaneous fit of rage more than once.

Street-tough accent and all, Hoffman plays Schultz as a barely tamed animal, only a veneer of civilization masking his primal brutality. With a toothy grin and amiable manner, Dean shows how a poor boy can be seduced by power, while Nicole Kidman strikes an alluring pose as the sophisticated moll

who has the nerve to correct Dutch's speech.

For all the fine performances, including memorable support from Steven Hill and Bruce Willis, the story never comes into focus. Too low-key to hold the spotlight, Dean is upstaged by Kidman's sexy irreverence and, especially, Hoffman's psychotic fury. Still, *Billy Bathgate* has moments where the twisted logic of crime makes perfect sense, where the interplay of cruelty and greed becomes a spellbinding ritual.

—Jon Young

My Own Private Idaho

1991. River Phoenix, Keanu Reeves; dir. Gus Van Sant. Hi-fi surround, cc. (R) 105 min. priced for rental. New Line.

Complete the following sentence: It takes guts to make a movie like *My Own Private Idaho* because: A) the average American moviegoer may not cotton to a film whose main character is openly gay; B) even those who have no problem with a gay lead may be intimidated by the many lines and scenarios co-opted from Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *V* plays; C) the presence of Keanu Reeves obliges every reviewer to make a joke about how the movie really should have been called *Hal and Ned's Excellent Adventure*.

My Own Private Idaho tells of the friendship between narcoleptic street hustler Mike Waters (River Phoenix), a "Ned Poins" to Scott Faver (Keanu Reeves), the "Prince Hal" who hustles only to embarrass his family until he comes into his inheritance at 21. Scott's "Falstaff" is one Bob Pigeon (played brilliantly by William Richert, director of *Winter Kills* and the River Phoenix vehi-



Private Idaho's
River Phoenix

A solitary, fundamental question may well shape the world of video software in the years ahead: Are videotapes and discs to serve merely as the last link in the chain of distribution for theatrical product—a way for studios to recoup losses on often mediocre films—or as carriers for unique programs with an excitement and allure all their own?

If the first scenario holds true, video software will likely go the way of the dinosaur, replaced by sleek new satellite systems that beam the latest hits—and little else—directly into homes. But when the potential of current software is fulfilled, as in the new Criterion Collection laserdisc of *Boyz N the Hood*, it's easy to imagine a future brimming with entertaining and informative video.

Boyz N the Hood contains all the hallmarks of the best Criterion releases: an immaculate and faithful transfer of a truly great movie, extras like deleted scenes and actors' screen tests, and a fascinating second-soundtrack commentary from first-time director John Singleton. Two attributes, however, set it apart. It was released on the same day as the rental tape version of the film—an almost unprecedented feat for a deluxe edition of a new title—and it's priced at a reasonable \$49.95, only \$15 more than Columbia TriStar's pan-and-scan, no-extras disc of the film, and about \$40 less than the videocassette. We can only hope to see many more discs of this type from Criterion—and from other companies.

In some cases, though, there's really no "best" way to produce a title for laserdisc. Image Entertainment's new edition of *Heaven's Gate* (\$59.95), Michael Cimino's infamous big-budget Art Western, includes the film's full 218-minute running time and its original 2.35:1 aspect ratio. This version has seldom been seen in this country, in theaters or on video. But sitting through it is still like reading a 500-page coroner's report. It's spellbinding in a morbid sort of way, but in the end the body is still dead. ■



Heaven's Gate

cle *A Night in the Life of Jimmy Reardon*). But the essence of *Idaho* is Mike's quest to find his elusive mother as well as reconcile his not-quite-required love for Scott, concepts that may be Shakespearean but aren't rooted in the Henry plays.

My Own Private Idaho is haunting, frightening and often beautiful. And the truth is, if Gus Van Sant had simply let the Bard be an inspiration rather than an integral concept, *My Own Private Idaho* might have been great.

—John Walker

The People Under the Stairs

1991. Everett Gill, Wendy Robie; dir. Wes Craven. Hi-fi surround, cc. (R) 102 min. priced for rental. LD \$34.98. MCA/Universal.

Writer-director Wes Craven origi-

such cases are sickening enough, and a movie about them would have been grossly exploitative. But this watered-down film will disappoint fans hoping for a return to the Craven of *Last House on the Left* or *The Hills Have Eyes*.

Desperate for money to keep his family from being evicted, a 13-year-old boy nicknamed "Fool" (Brandon Adams) agrees to join a robbery attempt on the spooky old mansion of a slumlord. But when the robbery goes awry, he is trapped in the house and hunted by the psychotic couple (Everett Gill and Wendy Robie) who live there. Help comes from prisoners of the house: the couple's abused daughter (A.J. Langer) and the barely glimpsed denizens of the secret passages between the walls.

The film's chief assets are strong performances from Adams and Langer, two excellent young actors. McGill and Robie are energetically macabre, but Craven undercuts them with too much jokey comic relief. *People Under the Stairs* is basically a chase movie with a few gratuitous, undeveloped "horror" touches. It's okay as a thriller, but scary? Hardly.

—MF

Homicide

1991. Joe Mantegna; dir. David Mamet. Hi-fi surround, cc. (R) 100 min. priced for rental. LD \$34.95. Columbia TriStar.

Detective Robert Gold (Joe Mantegna) is two kinds of cop: a street-smart detective whose only family is "the force," and the classic "good cop" who can charm cooperation from the stoniest suspect. But is Detective Gold—a man who can't distinguish between Hebrew and Yiddish—a good Jew? That's a question Gold must face in David Mamet's complex thriller *Homicide*.

Gold and his partner Tim Sullivan (William H. Macy) are key players in the precinct's search for a cop-killing fugitive. But Gold finds himself doing double duty when he stumbles into the aftermath of an apparent botched robbery and the shooting-death of an elderly shopkeeper. The victim's family is convinced the murder was motivated by anti-Semitism, and pulls strings to keep their fellow Jew assigned to the case. But Gold's frustration turns to confusion as he discovers the victim's ties to a group of militant Jews, and, in the process, is forced to confront his own identity—and loyalties. The outcome of Gold's de-

cision makes for a truly jolting climax.

Mamet's direction and dialog are so entertaining that one can forgive the occasional "large print" messages. *Homicide* isn't about homicide. It's about what drives people to kill.

—JW



Identity Crisis: Joe Mantegna's Detective Gold embarks on a voyage of self-discovery in *Homicide*.

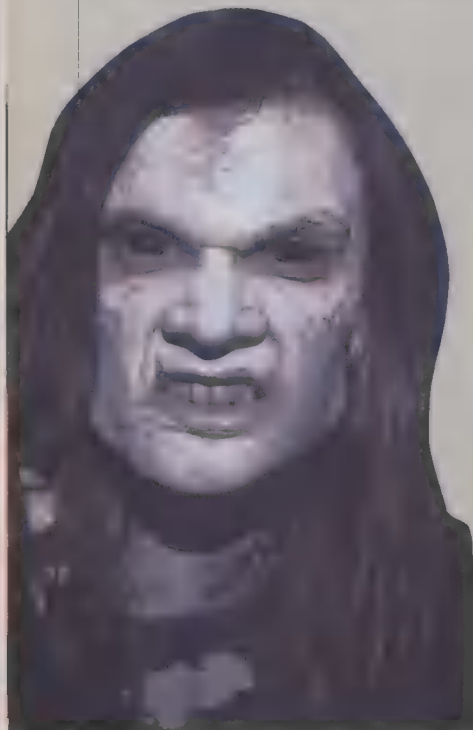
LASERDISCS

Aliens

1986. Sigourney Weaver, Michael Biehn; dir. James Cameron. Digital surround, cc. (R) 154 min. CAV boxed set, 7 sides. \$99.98. FoxVideo/Image.

James Cameron may soon rank as the laserdisc's best friend. With his gorgeous, carefully supervised transfer of *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, he set a new quality standard for the format. The captivating characterizations and awesome action of his movies inspire repeated viewing, making them worth owning on disc instead of renting on tape.

With his latest release—a digitally transferred, letterboxed CAV edition of his monster-movie masterpiece, *Aliens*, previously offered only as a murky pan-and-scan CLV—Cameron gives laserdisc fans an exclusive peek at almost 20 minutes of footage not seen in the theatrical release. But he didn't just toss in scraps from the editing room floor. The new footage adds greatly to the content of the film, extending several scenes, fleshing out the characters and clearing up sketchy spots in the complicated sto-



Monster Mash: Wes Craven's *The People Under the Stairs* attempts to blend laughs with horror.

nally conceived *The People Under the Stairs* as a horror film about children locked away from the world by their abusive parents. It's just as well he softened that idea: True-life stories about



Not Just Another Pretty Face: Sigourney Weaver meets the star of James Cameron's *Aliens*.

ry. Although I've watched *Aliens* at least seven times, the new footage improved my understanding of the story, increased my empathy for the characters and intensified the feeling of doom that makes this movie (and any good horror movie) so compelling.

The set includes an excellent interactive supplement that details the development of the film, investigates alternative story lines that Cameron explored, and reveals the secrets of the special effects.

Unfortunately, though, this is no demonstration disc. After seeing the T2 CAV, I expected the look of the new *Aliens* to blow me away. But many of the darker scenes are very grainy. I heard rumors that Cameron chose this look for the disc, but ■ call to Van Ling, Cameron's creative technical supervisor, set things straight. Apparently, many scenes were shot using high-speed film with little supplementary lighting, giving much of *Aliens* a natural, but grainy, look. For the new transfer, Cameron boosted the brightness of these scenes to increase detail, but in the process added even more grain. I compared the old transfer to the new, and feel that Cameron made the right decision—this is probably the best the film can look on video.

Despite significant technical problems, the new *Aliens* is a must for anyone who loves science-fiction or action movies. The price is steep, but the package provides hours of entertainment. You can't fully appreciate this film without seeing the new version. Cameron's next disc delight will be a boxed set of *The Abyss*, and I can't wait.

—**Brent Butterworth**

Midnight Cowboy

1969. Dustin Hoffman, Jon Voight; dir. John Schlesinger. Digital stereo, letterboxed. (R) 113 min. CAV 4 sides. \$89.99. Voyager/Criterion.

Experiencing the Criterion Collection version of this milestone film is almost as thrilling as seeing it for the first time. *Midnight Cowboy* introduced a blazing new talent in Jon Voight, and ratified the protean abilities of Hoffman as creepy Ratso Rizzo. Moviegoers then knew him only as the bland, befuddled Benjamin of *The Graduate*, and his transformation into a limping, tattered denizen of the mean streets is still a stunner.

But the film presents much more than an acting tour de force. Its story of ■ naive but vain bumpkin (Voight's Joe Buck) who dreams of copulating his way to riches in Manhattan, and his unlikely friendship with ■ lowlife urban parasite, dared audiences to look into the face of degradation and still see the heartbreaking humanity. It won Oscars for Best Picture, Direction and Screenplay.

British director Schlesinger, a favorite of highbrow critics for *Darling* and *Far From the Madding Crowd*, took his first look at America with *Midnight Cowboy* and was clearly fascinated by it. His penchant for the visual detail—whether in an East Side penthouse or a midtown flophouse—lends the movie a streetwise grittiness that we may now take for granted, but was a revelation in 1969.

Many Criterion releases contain an audio commentary on the analog track, and this one is exceptionally rich. Recollections and insights from Schlesinger

and producer Jerome Hellman, voiced with verve and conviction, run virtually non-stop from first frame to last, touching upon casting (Voight was not the first choice), budget, shooting logistics and the film's original X rating. The result is to make the viewer feel like a participant in a complex, highly satisfying adventure. Production/publicity stills, original trailer and two script excerpts round out the supplement.

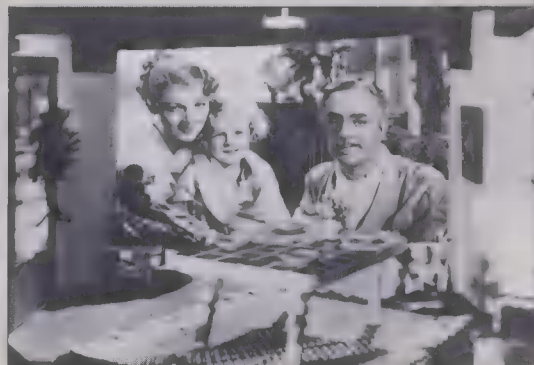
—**Andy Wickstrom**

The Great Ziegfeld

1936. B&W. William Powell, Luise Rainer, Myrna Loy; dir. Robert Z. Leonard. Digital mono. (NR) 177 min. CLV 3 sides. \$39.98. MGM/UA.

In 1936, Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. had been dead four years, but his trademark union of beautiful girls, beautiful music and beautiful settings lived on—in MGM's lavish biopic of the legendary showman, a \$2 million, three-hour spectacle that returned twice that amount and won the year's Best Picture Oscar. And though the source material used for this laserdisc shows its age—intermittent speckling plus occasional pops and crackles in the audio—*The Great Ziegfeld* is still as good as its namesake.

After a slow start, "Flo," played with a glib charm by William Powell, is a Broadway hit. He makes chanteuse Anna Held—the weepy, fluttery Best Actress Luise Rainer—a superstar, and weds her too. Thanks to Will Rogers, Fannie Brice (in a small, hilarious role)



All in the Family: Christmas with *The Great Ziegfeld* (William Powell), wife (Myrna Loy) and daughter.

and Eddie Cantor, his *Follies* thrive. And after a divorce, he remarries—another actress, Billie Burke (Myrna Loy)—who is with him until his death. ▶

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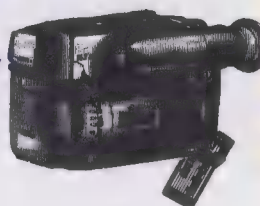


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Melodramatics aside, what elevates this picture are those 300 or so Ziegfeld girls, parading elaborate Adrian costumes during "You Never Looked So Beautiful Before" or waking up with a sip of champagne during a "boudoir ballet." At the pinnacle of glamorous over-indulgence is "A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody." It incorporates bits from *Madame Butterfly*, *Rhapsody in Blue*, *Pagliacci* and more while dance numbers and ensembles intersect, and the camera glides round and round an enormous wedding cake setpiece—this alone is worth the price of the disc. —**April P. Bernard**

The Thing (From Another World)

1951. Kenneth Tobey, Margaret Sheridan; dir. Christian Nyby, pr. Howard Hawks. Digital mono. (NR) 87 min. Side 2 CAV. \$49.98. Turner/Image.

Howard Hawks' *The Thing* has both style and sense to its credit. Sci-fi fans love the film for its concise, intelligent story of a confrontation with a deadly alien invader (James Arness) at an Arctic outpost. Movie buffs adore its "in-joke" references to Howard Hawks films like *Sergeant York*. And the rest of us, who saw it on TV as kids, consider it a damned scary movie.

The problem with *The Thing* is that the only decent video previously available was missing seven minutes cut from the film during the 1960s. Image Entertainment obviously put a lot of time into restoring *The Thing*, and it has paid off. The "lost" footage, principally involving a semi-kinky love scene between Kenneth Tobey and Margaret Sheridan, is fairly clean but pale. The sound throughout varies in volume but is passable. And the disc has been mastered properly dark, though the denouement is far too murky. Still, the disc is enjoyable, especially on side two, where the CAV function lets you scan in slow motion the scene in which the alien (stuntman Tom Steele), lit afire, escapes a darkened room.

Jeff Schwager's notes are informative but not insightful, and miss an obvious topical element—the conflict between Robert Cornthwaite's idealistic scientist and Kenneth Tobey's Air Force pilot recalls the contemporary struggle over whether scientists or the military should control defense policy. In a 1951 film, guess which side wins. —**Bruce Eder**



Otherworldly:
The Thing's
Sheridan and Tobey.

Tumbleweeds

1925. William S. Hart; dir. King Baggot. Silent with musical accompaniment. Digital mono. 89 min. CLV 2 sides. \$29.98. Republic.

The Lost World

1925. Wallace Beery, Lewis Stone; dir. Harry Hoyt. Silent with musical accompaniment. Digital stereo. 90 min. Side 2 CAV. \$44.98. Lumivision.

William S. Hart (1865-1946) grew up in the West before becoming a celebrated Shakespearean star. But he never forgot his roots, and he entered movies as an actor, writer and director intent on presenting the real West. *Tumbleweeds* was his final film, and, with grit and a bittersweet autumnal mood, it re-creates the 1889 opening of the Cherokee Strip to settlers.

The plot, involving a rancher (Hart) facing the end of his way of life, and who protects the settlers from thieves, is pre-

sented on a vast scale. Republic's source has flaws, which are compensated for by its clarity and tinting—the soft amber is never oversaturated, and, coupled with the print's detail, makes one feel the trail dust. The movie has the look of period photography, and halfway through the land-rush sequence—involving thousands of extras, wagons and horses—it's easy to forget that it's a movie.

The Lost World is a fast-paced fore-runner to *King Kong*, featuring stop-motion animation by Willis O'Brien. Alas, by today's standards, the dinosaurs have the artificial look of claymation figures, except that they are more convincing photographed in black-and-white. The disc's Eastman House materials are the best known to exist, and, except for some fading, have held up well.

The Lost World has survived only in an edited form—the disc provides details of the missing scenes, and except for some lost dinosaur sequences, the short version probably plays better. Also included are the original trailer and three early O'Brien shorts in fair shape. R. J. Miller's electronic score is lively and fun, although the sound effects included on the digital audio track are distracting (the analog track contains the music alone). In any case, sci-fi and animation fans should consider *The Lost World* as vital to their collections as *Kong*. —**BE**



A Night at the Movies:
Lumivision's *The Lost World* disc includes three Willis O'Brien shorts and a trailer.

CLASSICS

The Marriage of Maria Braun

1978. Hanna Schygulla, Klaus Lowitsch, Ivan Desny; wr./dir. Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Hi-fi mono, subtitled. (R) 120 min. \$79.95. New Yorker.

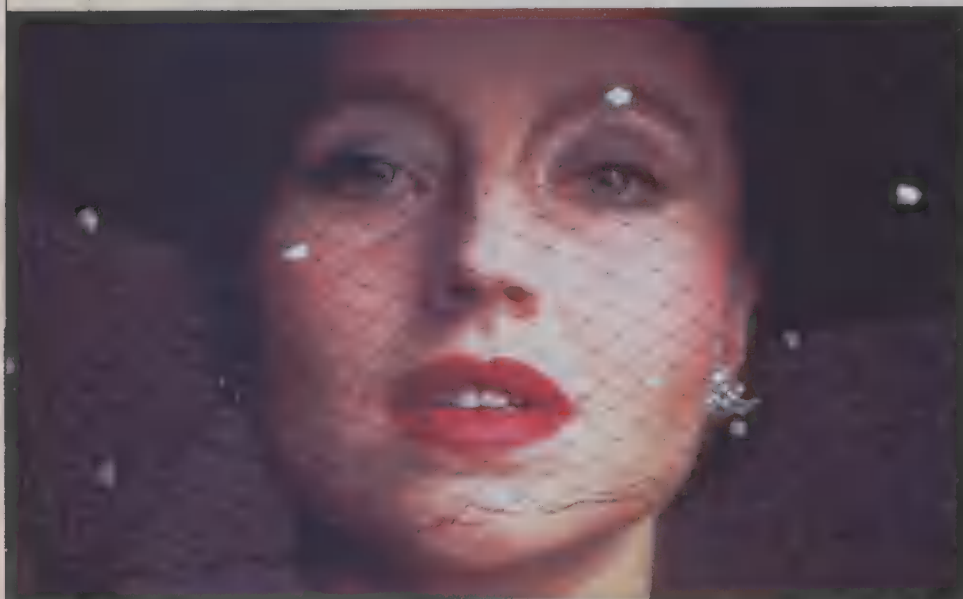
The Marriage of Maria Braun is the best of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's feature films and one of the landmarks of the New German Cinema; its pitiless vision of postwar Germany hasn't dated by a minute. Fassbinder's inspiration was to set his amorality play in the period just after World War II, when Germany lies

ting in the way, until the gulf between them becomes unbridgeable.

Maria's road to the good life is paved with telling thumbnail portraits executed with aplomb by Fassbinder's repertory company, and the imagery, caught in fluid camera movements, is rich and complex. Hanna Schygulla's performance, mean and sexy, is a classic by itself. Fassbinder leaves the ending open to interpretation—perhaps too much interpretation. That's no reason to avoid this compelling and cruelly funny movie.

If you have *The Marriage of Maria Braun* in its previous RCA/Columbia release, you don't have to rush to replace it. But this re-release, with its fine transfer and yellow subtitles, is preferable.

—SLS



Foreign Affairs: Hanna Schygulla is Maria Braun in Fassbinder's classic study of postwar Germany.

in ruins and everyone is scrambling for food and firewood. With no time for soul-searching, the nation progresses from rubble to prosperity without examining its past. It sells its history, and its soul, for money.

Maria Braun, whose husband of a single day disappeared at the Russian front, proves one hell of a survivor. Having learned English from a black G.I. (with whom she had an affair that came to a literally crashing halt), she makes herself indispensable, in the boardroom and elsewhere, to Oswald, a wealthy textile manufacturer. She still professes love for her husband, but fate keeps get-

SPECIAL INTEREST

Frankenweenie

1984. Barrett Oliver, Shelley Duvall, Daniel Stern; dir. Tim Burton. Hi-fi surround. (NR) 28 min. \$14.99. Walt Disney.

Frankenweenie could be the greatest short film ever made, at least for fans of old movies or the films of Steven Spielberg, and for anyone who has ever lost a pet. Tim Burton's debut film deals with a boy, Victor Frankenstein, whose dog is killed and who subsequently brings the

pet back to life. The 28 minutes it takes to tell this story are filled with enough humor, pathos, wish-fulfillment and unresolved loss to rival *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*. Looking at Burton's dazzling visual shorthand (which doesn't waste a single frame), one can't help but think there was a clever, honest child inside the director, guiding him through the task of making this movie.

Frankenweenie's satirical elements, relating to horror films (even *Wolfen* gets a nod), make it lots of fun as well. The black-and-white photography recalls Universal's 1930s horror classics, and within this framework, Burton jumps easily between scenes and shots that allude to James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931) and *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), and others reminiscent of *E.T.* The ending manages to be as happy as the latter but also as macabre as those two vintage classics, and my only real complaint is that it isn't on laserdisc yet. (C'mon, Image Entertainment—how about a CAV disc, with commentary by Burton!) —BE

Independent Short Film Showcase

1992 comps. "Best of the Fests 1991": Hi-fi mono/stereo. (NR) 90 min. \$39.95. "Tony Vegas' Animated Acidburn Flashback Tabu": Hi-fi mono/stereo. (NR) 60 min. \$29.95. Picture Start.

In an era where most feature films flow like a thawing river, watching shorts is a welcome relief, akin to Olympic boxing's three-round bouts—com-

A Dog's Life:
Frankenweenie's re-animated pooch.





Hands of Fate: Joan Stavley's anti-violence film "Wanting for Bridge" highlights *Best of the Fests*.

pressed action with a quick payoff. Current arts funding issues aside, independent shorts have more freedom to present outrageous or politically volatile topics. Picture Start's *Best of the Fests 1991*, the most recent in a series of compilations dating back to 1988, delivers a mixed bag of animation, comedies and documentaries from international film festivals, and succeeds as a testament to the variety and vitality of the independent community.

The cassette box for *Tony Vegas' Animated Acidburn Flashback Tabu* promises transcendence and revelation, inviting one to "ingest the forbidden fruit." Of the 11 animated shorts offered here, some do recall past ingestions, but transcendence and revelation are in the eye and mind of the beholder. At any rate, these works come from some very talented people, so sit close to the TV and open your doors of perception for an hour. It's completely legal and guilt-free.

Picture Start's Independent Showcase series now has 11 titles, and all are worth a look for anyone with an interest in independent film. Check your video store or call Picture Start in Chicago at 312-SOX-CITY.

—Brian Clark

The Fugitive Collector's Anthology

1991 comps. 10 vols. Vol. 1: "The Girl From Little Egypt" (1965) and "The End Is But the Beginning" (1965). David Janssen, Barry Morse; dirs. Vincent McEveety ("Egypt") and Walter Grauman ("Beginning"). 104 min. Two episodes per volume, available through mail-order (800-333-0113). \$24.95 each. Nu Ventures Vid-

eo Library, 7930 Alabama Avenue, Canoga Park, CA 91304.

Call it a Christian crime drama, but don't call *The Fugitive* a flop. Twenty-nine years ago, Dr. Richard Kimble began running. And when he stopped, on August 29, 1967, the largest TV audience in the world watched him prove his innocence by confronting the man who had killed his wife.

A huge success in its initial run, *The Fugitive* followed the adventures of the falsely accused Dr. Kimble (David Janssen) as he crisscrossed the country searching for the One-Armed Man who could clear him. It inspired a slew of imitations (*The Invaders*, *Run for Your Life*, *The Incredible Hulk*) and homages (frequent references were made to it on *Twin Peaks*), but no equal. And no wonder: It was an odd combination of morality and melodrama, cleverly dressed up as an action series.

"The Girl From Little Egypt" sets the pattern for the 119 other episodes: Kimble accidentally gets involved in a sordid drama of infidelity but manages to set a young girl on the right path before fleeing the police. Although thin by *Fugitive* standards, it does contain footage—via flashbacks—from the series' unaired pilot, showing how the Kimbles fought, wife Helen died, and the doctor began running. "The End is But the Beginning," from the second season, explores Lt. Philip Gerard's (Barry Morse) obsession with catching Kimble. The storyline finds the Fugitive trying to convince the detective he was killed in a truck wreck. *The Fugitive's* message is endlessly appealing. It's a modern morality tale—and fun, to boot.

—Tom Soter



The Babysitters Club

1992. "Dawn and the Dream Boy" (Vol. 6); "Claudia and the Missing Jewels" (Vol. 7); 30 min. each. \$12.95 each. Scholastic/GoodTimes. Ages 6-12.

Sometime this year, Scholastic Inc. will sell its 50 millionth *Babysitters Club* book. Any other series with that kind of phenomenal success would automatically be exploited by commercial television. But network programmers have freely confessed they avoid children's shows with female lead characters. They claim that boys won't watch 'em, while girls will watch male heroes. So it was left to a pay cable network to develop a live-action, half-hour series about these girls. They're average, all-American pals who run a babysitting service while negotiating the bumpy terrain of young romance and responsibility.

You won't find the slick production values of *Beverly Hills 90210* here, or teen-age characters being faked by twentysomething hunks. These performers are truly acting their age, so the sometimes stiff line readings are offset by youthful charm.

The stories hold to sitcom standards



Teen Spirit: *The Babysitters Club* provides outstanding role models for budding adolescents.

of easily learned lessons, 30-minute solutions and lots of hugging. The girls are often stuck in plots that have them pining over a cute guy ("Dawn") or erroneously suspecting an adult of wrongdoing ("Claudia"). What commends this series, though, is the welcome role modeling of reliable, intelligent young girls who meet life's everyday obstacles and triumph over them. That, alas, is something rare and wonderful.

—Marianne Meyer

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

Broadway Bill

1934. B&W. Myrna Loy, Warner Baxter, Margaret Hamilton, Jason Robards; dir. Frank Capra. "Collector's Edition" of comedy lost to the public for 40 years. Frank Capra Jr. delivers the intro to this charmer about an heiress at the racetrack. Mono. (NR) 100 min. VHS only, \$19.95 (packaged with *Meet John Doe* "Collector's Edition," \$29.95). Pacific Arts.

Bugsy, Dutch & Al—The Gangsters

1991 comp. B&W/color. If *Mobsters*, *Billy Bathgate* and *Bugsy* weren't enough to fuel your tommy-gun frenzy, try this documentary packed with vintage footage and reenactments. Hi-fi mono. 60 min. VHS only, \$19.95. Rhino.

Chronos

1985. Filmed in 70mm, this "visual symphony" uses innovative camera work to propel viewers to Stonehenge, the pyramids of Egypt, the Arc de Triomphe, the Vatican, the Grand Canyon and dozens of other timeless locations. Hi-fi stereo. 40 min. VHS \$19.98. LD price n.a. Miramar.

The Civil War

1990. B&W/color. Seven-disc set of Ken Burns' lauded documentary series, the highest rated in the history of PBS. Digital mono, cc. (NR) 680 min. LD \$199.95. Im-age.

Labels For Less

Judy Garland's
telling in
Gay Purr-ee



There's music in the air this May, and it costs \$19.98: **MGM/UA** is debuting four Judy Garland musicals, including *Everybody Sing*, and reducing prices on five others, such as *Babes in Arms*. **Warner's** "High Notes" feature *Graffiti Bridge* and the animated *Gay Purr-ee*.

Also for \$19.98 (give or take a nickel), **Orion** has the blockbuster *The Silence of the Lambs*, **MGM/UA** has *All Dogs Go to Heaven* and *The Pope of Greenwich Village*, **Touchstone** has *Three Men and a Little Lady*, **Paramount** has *He Said, She Said*, **Hollywood Pictures** has *Arachnophobia*, **Columbia TriStar** has *Look Who's Talking Too*, **Warner** has its JFK conspiracy thriller *Executive Action*, and **Vestron** has its 50-title catalog of *National Geographic* releases. In the neighborhood of \$15, Warner is offering *Leo Gorcey* and the other Bowery Boys in six new-to-video comedies.

Columbia TriStar is still celebrating the Oscars with *Avalon*, *Metropolitan*, *Ship of Fools* and *The Awful Truth* at \$19.98, *Nicholas and Alexandra* at \$29.98—plus other winners in the athletic department, with *Andre Agassi's Attack* and *Curtis Strange's* golf instruction at \$19.95... **MCA/Universal** is showcasing "Great Battles, Explosive Videos" with *Beau Geste*, *Gray Lady Down* and eight others repriced to \$14.95.

—APB



Take Two: Akira Kurosawa, known for *The Seven Samurai*, adapted Dostoevski for *The Idiot*.

Crime Story

1986-88. 10 vols. The complete saga: NBC's popular gangster drama, with Dennis Farina. Mono. 96-336 min. each. VHS only, \$14.95 each, \$149.99 set. Starmaker.

The Front Page

1974. Jack Lemmon, Walter Matthau, Vincent Gardenia, Susan Sarandon, Carol Burnett; dir. Billy Wilder. Third remake of the snappy Ben Hecht/Charles MacArthur play—about Chicago newsmen embroiled in their hottest scoop, the escape of a con-

victed murderer—capitalizes on the chemistry between an *Odd Couple* of stellar leads. Hi-fi mono. (PG) 105 min. VHS \$89.95. LD \$34.98. MCA/Universal.

Hangin' With the Homeboys

1991. Mario Joyner, Doug E. Doug; dir. Joseph B. Vasquez. A night in the life of four South Bronx teens—mistaken for *Boyz n the Hood* clone but more in the spirit of buddy-pic *Diner*. Hi-fi surround, cc. (R) 90 min. VHS \$89.95. LD price n.a. Columbia TriStar.

How Green Was My Valley

1941. B&W. Walter Pidgeon, Maureen O'Hara, Roddy McDowall; dir. John Ford. Winner of five Oscars—perhaps partially due to an attempt to snub young upstart Orson Welles and his first film, something called *Citizen Kane*—director John Ford's saga of a coal-mining family in a Welsh village still moves with its simplicity and sheer honesty. Includes a music and effects track. Digital stereo, cc. (NR) 118 min. LD \$39.98. FoxVideo.

The Idiot

1951. B&W. Toshiro Mifune, Masayuki Mori; dir. Akira Kurosawa. The tragic story of two men—one simple and gentle, the other powerful and obsessive—in love with the same woman. A superb combination of two international masters, Kurosawa and Dostoevski. Mono, subtitled. (NR) 166 min. VHS only, \$79.95. New Yorker.

The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner

1962. B&W. Tom Courtenay, Michael Redgrave; dir. Tony Richardson. A '60s pace-setter in Britain: Biggest obstacle for re-

Compiled by April P. Bernard

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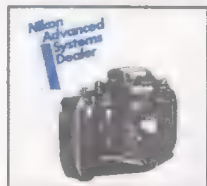
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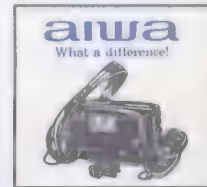
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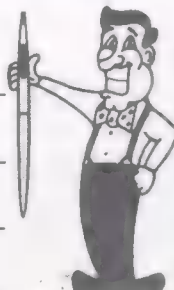
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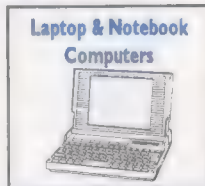
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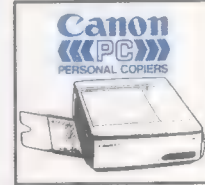
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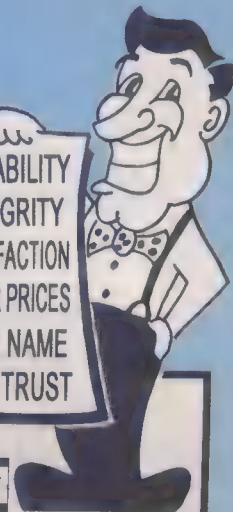
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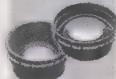
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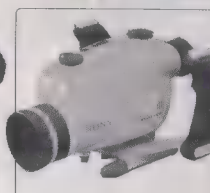


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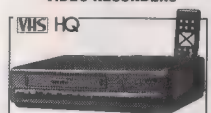
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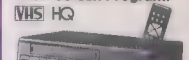
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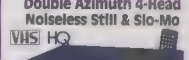
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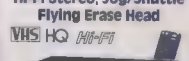
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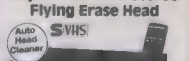
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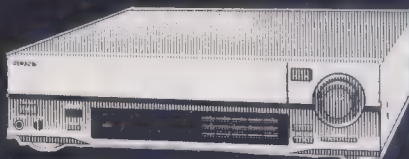
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DIRECTORY

continued from page 57

form-school lad in track race is "the system." Hi-fi mono. (NR) 104 min. VHS, Beta \$19.98. LD \$34.98. Warner.

1992 Winter Olympics Highlights 1992 Winter Olympics Figure Skating Highlights

1992. 2 vols. The best from Albertville, France. Hi-fi stereo. 60 min. (Highlights), 45 min. (Figure Skating). VHS, Beta \$19.98 each, \$34.98 set. CBS/Fox.

The Quiet Man

1952. John Wayne, Maureen O'Hara; dir. John Ford. "Deluxe Collector's Edition" celebrates the 40th anniversary of John Ford's Oscar-winning classic—an American prize fighter adapts to his new home in Ireland—with remastered image, behind-the-scenes documentary and trailer, plus a 320-page hardcover, *The Films of John Wayne* (with tape collector's edition only) and reproductions of the lobby card and exhibitor's manual. Mono. (NR) 155 min. VHS \$69.98 (tape only, \$19.98). LD \$59.98. Republic.

Singin' in the Rain

1951. Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds, Donald O'Connor; dirs. Kelly, Stanley Donen. Forty years ago, Gene Kelly splashed his way about a deserted city street in what would become a musical legend. Today, this comic look at Hollywood's transition to talkies is spruced up in a remastered anniversary edition, which also includes trailer, outtakes and a deleted number: Debbie Reynolds' version of "You Are My Lucky Star." Hi-fi mono, cc. (G) 103 min. VHS, Beta \$19.98. LD \$24.98 (CLV), \$39.98 (CAV). MGM/UA.

The Sleeping Beauty

1989. The Kirov's acclaimed production of Tchaikovsky's romantic ballet, at the Place des Arts in Montreal. Hi-fi stereo. 130 min. VHS \$34.95. LD \$59.95. PolyGram.

The Ten Commandments

1956. Charlton Heston, Yul Brynner, Anne Baxter, Edward G. Robinson and a cast of thousands; dir. Cecil B. DeMille. *Night of a Hundred Stars*, circa 1956. Still, mind-boggling in its spectacle and ambition—and worth another look on its 35th anniversary. With original onscreen intro by DeMille and theatrical trailers. Hi-fi surround, letterboxed, cc. (G) 245 min. VHS \$35 (Charlton Heston "Autographed Limited Edition" \$135). LD (Sides 4 & 5 CAV) \$89.95. Paramount.

Trials of Life

1991. 12 vols. Sir David Attenborough hosts this BBC-produced series, examining the animal kingdom—with all its wild, sometimes unsettling ways—from birth to death. 60 min. each. VHS only, \$19.99 each (Vol. 1, "Hunting and Escaping," \$9.99), \$179.95 set. Time-Life.

The Very Best of the Ed Sullivan Show

1991 comps. B&W. 2 vols. Carol Burnett and Burt Reynolds host these retrospectives of an entertainment legend. With performances from Jack Benny to the Jackson Five, the Beatles to the Byrds, the Beach Boys to Joan Rivers. Mono, cc. 90 min. each. VHS, Beta \$19.99 each. Buena Vista.

DRAMA

Blood & Concrete

1991. Billy Zane, Jennifer Beals, Darren McGavin; dir. Jeffrey Reiner. Black comedy revolving around L.A.'s hottest and hippest drug, Libido. Hi-fi stereo. (R) 97 min. VHS \$89.95. LD \$34.95. Columbia TriStar.

Collision Course

1989. Jay Leno, Pat Morita; dir. Lewis Teague. The chaotic collaborations of Tokyo and Detroit detectives. Hi-fi stereo, cc. (PG) 99 min. VHS only, \$89.99. HBO.

Curly Sue

1991. James Belushi, Kelly Lynch, Alisan Porter; wr./dir. John Hughes. Cute 9-year-old con artist and her "guardian" choose a yuppie lawyer as their next target—with surprising results. Hi-fi surround, cc. (PG) 102 min. VHS, Sp.-subtitled VHS, Beta \$94.99. 8mm, LD (letterboxed) \$29.98. Warner.

Round Numbers

1990. Kate Mulgrew, Samantha Eggar; dir. Nancy Zala. Housewife—jealous of hubby's attentions to the Muffler Mate of the Month—joins health club. Stereo. (R) 98 min. VHS only, \$89.95. Coyote.

Strictly Business

1991. Tommy Davidson, Joseph C. Phillips, Halle Berre; dir. Kevin Hooks. Mailroom employee plays matchmaker to climb the corporate ladder. Hi-fi surround, cc. (PG-13) 83 min. VHS, Sp.-subtitled VHS, Beta \$94.99. LD \$29.98. Warner.

COMEDY

The Big Man

1991. Liam Neeson, Joanne Whalley-Kilmer; dir. David Leland. The vastly underrated Liam Neeson (*Darkman*, *The Good Mother*) is an out-of-work British coal miner seduced by the money to be made from boxing in illegal "bare-knuckled" matches. Hi-fi stereo. (R) 93 min. VHS \$89.95. LD \$34.95. Columbia TriStar.

Lonely Hearts

1991. Eric Roberts, Beverly D'Angelo, Joanna Cassidy; dir. Andrew Lane. Con man loves 'em and leaves 'em—with an empty bank account—but his new girlfriend could end his career. Mono, cc. (R) 109 min. VHS \$89.98. LD \$34.95. LIVE.

Memphis

1991. Cybill Shepherd, John Laughlin; dir. Yves Simoneau. Kidnapping of a black businessman's grandson in the 1950s goes awry. Hi-fi stereo, cc. (M: Mature) 92 min. VHS, Beta \$89.98. Turner.

Shout

1991. James Walters, Heather Graham, John Travolta; dir. Jeffrey Hornaday. Rock 'n' roll gives the Benedict School for Boys a jolt. Hi-fi surround, cc. (PG-13) 89 min. VHS, Beta priced for rental. LD \$34.98. MCA/Universal.

The Star

1952. B&W. Bette Davis, Sterling Hayden, Natalie Wood; dir. Stuart Heisler. Bette Davis—playing a washed-up actress on the

continued on page 70

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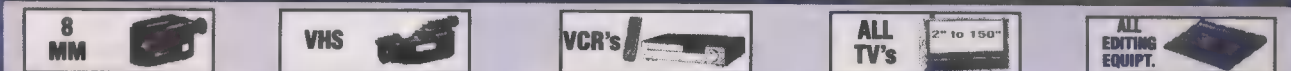
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DIRECTORY

continued from page 68

comeback trail—took one of her own Oscars for a drunken joyride (and was nominated for another Academy Award for the performance). Mono. (NR) 91 min. VHS, Beta \$29.98. Warner.

Target: Favorite Son

1988. Harry Hamlin, Robert Loggia, Linda Kozlowski; dir. Jeff Bleckner. Intricately plotted TV-movie: Scandals, seductions and secrets abound during election year in D.C. Stereo, cc. (R) 115 min. VHS, Sp.-subtitled VHS \$89.95. Vidmark.

Year of the Gun

1991. Andrew McCarthy, Sharon Stone; dir. John Frankenheimer. Political thriller set in Rome, from the director of *The Manchurian Candidate*. Hi-fi surround. (R) 111 min. VHS priced for rental. 8mm price n.a. LD \$34.95. Columbia TriStar.

ACTION/ADVENTURE

Deadly Bet

1992. Charlene Tilton; dir. Richard W. Munchkin. Showdown between gambler and Vegas kingpin. Hi-fi stereo. (R) 93 min. VHS, Sp.-subtitled VHS \$89.95. PM.

Prime Target

1991. Tony Curtis, Isaac Hayes; dir. David Heavener. Mob boss is ready to sing—if the FBI or the “family” doesn’t get to him first. Stereo. (R) 87 min. VHS, Sp.-subtitled VHS \$89.95. Hemdale.

HORROR/THRILLER

Deceived

1991. Goldie Hawn, John Heard; dir. Damian Harris. After her husband is apparently killed, career woman discovers she trusted him too easily. Hi-fi surround, cc. (PG-13) 108 min. VHS, Beta priced for rental. Touchstone.

Liebestraum

1991. Kevin Anderson, Pamela Gidley, Kim Novak; dir. Mike Figgis. One of last year’s sleepers: Love triangle resembles trio from 40 years earlier—murder and all. Hi-fi stereo, cc. (R, unrated versions) 109-116 min. VHS, Beta \$89.99. LD \$34.98. MGM/UA.

KIDVID

Dance! Workout With Barbie

1992. Stop-motion animation lets Barbie and Kim aerobicise with a group of 7- to 11-year-old girls. Hi-fi surround, cc. 30 min. VHS, Beta \$19.99. Buena Vista.

Farm Animals: Close Up and Very Personal

1991. Cows, pigs and horses mooing, grunting, neighing and more, with little narration. Stereo. 30 min. VHS only, \$14.95. Stage Fright Productions.

Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel

1992. Anim. Recession kidvid: Mike loses his job. Hi-fi stereo. 25 min. VHS only, \$12.95. Golden Book.

The Selfish Giant

1985. Anim. Oscar Wilde’s fable, part of a *Reader’s Digest* collection (along with *The Little Mermaid*, *The Happy Prince* and *The Remarkable Rocket*). Hi-fi stereo, cc. 30 min. VHS only, \$12.98. f.h.e.

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1991. Color/B&W. Two boxed sets from series narrated by George C. Scott: *Air Weapons*, with “Helicopters,” “Fighters” and “Bombers,” and *Ground Weapons*, with “Tanks,” “Artillery” and “Infantry.” Stereo. 150 min. each set. VHS only, \$44.95 each set. A&E.

Butt Out! The Proven Quit Smoking Plan

1992. Kick the habit, with Ed Asner and Dr. Alan P. Xenakis. Mono. 35 min. VHS only, \$24.95. Xenejex.

The Republic Pictures Story

1991 comp. B&W/color. The history of the studio that shot its first film in two weeks in 1935—John Wayne starring in *Westward Ho*. Mono. 114 min. VHS \$19.98. LD \$29.98. Republic.

South China Seas: Singapore to Borneo

1989. A travel video that’s entertaining and personal—without resorting to *Runaway With the Rich* and *Famous* glitter. Mono. 85 min. VHS only, \$29.95. Wish You Were Here Productions.

Speed Racer

1967. Anim. Three new episodes of one of the early Japanimation hits. Mono. 30 min. (*The Car Hater*), 60 min. (*Mach 5 vs. Mach 5* and *The Fire Race*). VHS only, \$19.98 (60-min. episodes), \$14.98 (30-min. episode). VidAmerica.

Survival of Spaceship Earth

1972. Emmy-winning environmental statement, commissioned 20 years ago by the U.N. conference. Mono. (NR) 63 min. VHS only, \$14.95. Kit Parker.

SPORTS/FITNESS

On Any Sunday

1971. Steve McQueen; dir. Bruce Brown. *Endless Summer* for motorcycle riders includes a tribute to Steve McQueen. A Best Documentary Oscar nominee. Mono. (NR) 90 min. VHS only, \$39.95. Pacific Arts.

The PGA Tour’s 18 Toughest Holes Fabulous Finishes of the PGA Tour Swings and Misses

1991. 3-vol. set. On the green with hosts Mark McCumber, Pat Summerall and Robert Wuhl. Mono. Approx. 45 min. each. VHS only, \$59.95 set. Sports Illustrated.

Triumph on Tobacco Road

1992. Profiles four NCAA basketball giants: University of North Carolina, Duke, N.C. State and Wake Forest. Hi-fi stereo. Approx. 45 min. VHS, Beta \$19.98. CBS/Fox.

MUSIC/PERFORMING ARTS

Emmylou Harris and the Nash Ramblers at the Ryman

1992. Last year’s acoustic performance from the recent Grand Ole Opry inductee. Hi-fi stereo. 48 min. VHS \$16.98. LD \$29.98. Warner Represe.

The Mills Brothers Story

1986 comp. B&W/color. The group that harmonized on “Paper Doll” and “You Al-

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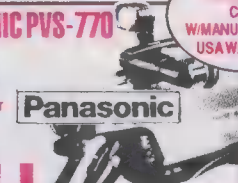
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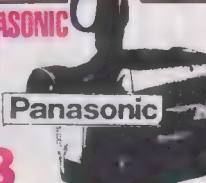
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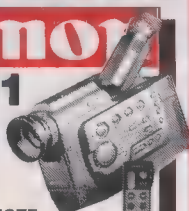
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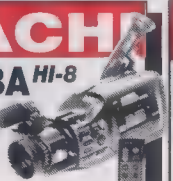
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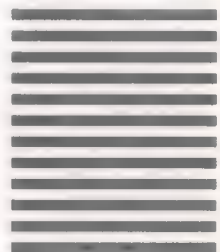
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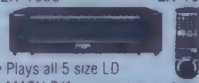


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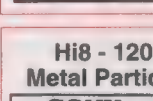
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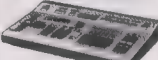


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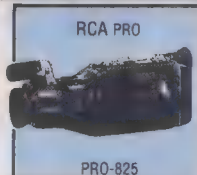
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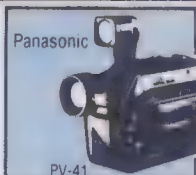
PRO-860



PRO-825



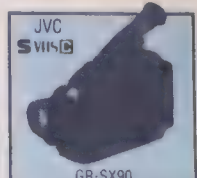
R88H



PV-41



PV-S770



GR-SX90



GR-AX10

JVC

CAMCORDERS

GR-AX2 GR-S707U
GR-AX5 GR-303U
GR-AX10 GR-S505U
GR-SX90

VIDEO RECORDERS

HR-DX20 HR-D910
HR-DX40 HR-D960
HR-D720 HR-S4700
HR-D740 HR-S6700
HR-D760 HR-S10000

TELEVISIONS

AV-2061 AV-3151S
AV-2081S AV-3291S
AV-2771S AV-3551S
AV-2781S AV-3591S

JVC
Video Production
Center

- 16 Wipes
- Joy stick for color balance
- S-VHS Compatible CALL

VIDEOICS

Pro Ed
Direct Ed plus
Production assistant
Graphic libraries 1-5
Video equalizer
Super production assistant

CAMCORDERS

PRO 815 CC 415
PRO 820 CC 445
PRO 825 CC 512
PRO 860 CC 525
PRO 880HB CC 560

VIDEO RECORDERS

VR-335 VR-665HF
VR-505 VR-680HF
VR-535 VR-690HF
VR-660HF VR-696HF
VR-740HF

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Sima 20w compact SL-5
Arc 20w 2000
Arc 10-20-30w 3000
Canon 20w VL-20
Canon 30w VL-30

A/V SELECTOR-MIXERS
AV-S20
JVC RM-V1000
Sima Sed-2
Sima Sed-3

A/V SELECTOR-MIXERS

CONTINUED
Sima sound mixer SSM
Panasonic controller AG-95
Panasonic A/V mixer WJ-AVE5

MICROPHONES

Sima sound catcher SLF
Sima mixer mike SAM
Sima tele mike STM-2
Sima cam mike SRM
JVC sup dir MZ350
JVC stereo sup dir MZ707
Nady wireless 151VRLT
Nady wireless 151VRHT

MICROPHONES

CONTINUED
Azden wireless kit WMS Pro
Azden wireless kit WMS-100

CHARACTER GENERATOR

JVC title CG-V60
Panasonic title WJ-TTL5
Panasonic title VWCGIP
RCA title/enhancer VCC1000

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- S-VHS output

CHARACTER GEN.

PV-CC50



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PV 4127	309.95	PV-4962	389.00
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PV 4160	599.00	UX-200	699.00
UX 1001	CALL	PV-VPI Vid. Pr.	849.00
PT-1001	CALL	DC Projector	969.00

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PV-M749	599.00	PV-M2045	569.00
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GR-707	829.00	GR-303U	659.00
GRS-5505	929.00	GR-SX90U	959.00

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KX-770	599.95	KX-770	599.95
KX-770	599.95	KX-770	599.95

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A1 Digital	1449.00	E-63	599.00
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RCA ACCESSORIES

CC-180

CC-390

CC-405

CC-415

CC-420

CC-430

CC-440

CC-450

CC-460

CC-470

CC-480

CC-490

CC-500

CC-510

CC-520

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— THIS MONTH'S SPECIALS —

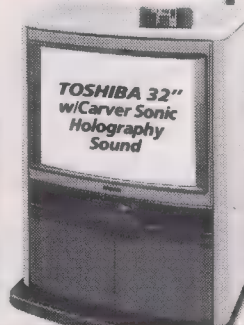
• JVC / GRS70U SUPER VHS COMPACT ... **\$699** • 8mm 8x200m W/REMOTE ... **\$559**

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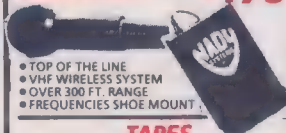


SUPER VHS & BETA SPECIALS of the MONTH

• 4+2 SUPER VHS HI-FI MTS Super Fly Erase / 410 Lines / Synchro Edit ... **\$499**
• TOSHIBA 4 HEAD HI-FI STEREO ... **\$319**
• BETAMAX ... **\$299**
• 8mm PLAYER/RECORDER ... **\$329**

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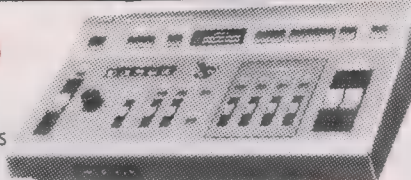
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• VIDEO LASER DISC DIGITAL STEREO ... **\$299**
• VIDEO DISC DIGITAL STEREO w/ Auto Reverse ... **\$499** • LASER DISC w/ Special Effects & Optical Output ... **\$769**

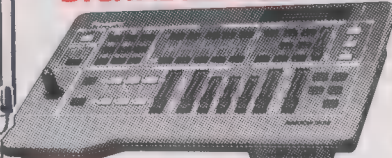
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• 8 BACKGROUND COLORS plus COLOR BAR CHART
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DIGITAL IMPOSE



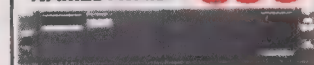
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• SUPERIMPOSE • FADE IN / FADE OUT
• AUDIO MIXING
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Plus! Can be powered by video camera, AC adapter or AA batteries!

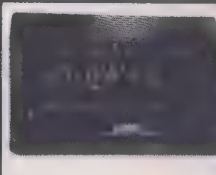
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AP1000

Responds to sound, infra-red remote control signals, or can be preset for continuous panning (adjustable speed & angle). Powered by Sony-type camcorder battery.

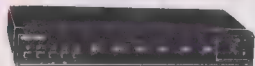
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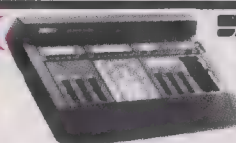
VIDICRAFT VidiMate 200



VDM200

The VidiMate improves picture quality during playback or editing from any source. Features automatic fades, fine adjustment of outline, detail brightness, color and tint. PLUS-2 video inputs and 4 video/audio outputs! PLUS-VidiMate features split screen for before/after comparison. **\$99.95**

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DIRECTORY

continued from page 70

ways Hurt (the One You Love)." Hi-fi mono. 56 min. VHS, Beta \$29.95. Kultur.

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LASERDISCS

All That Jazz

1979. Roy Scheider, Jessica Lange, Ann Reinking; dir. Bob Fosse. Fosse on Fosse, in a graphic, rarely flattering examination of a driven Broadway director/choreographer. Digital stereo, letterboxed, cc. (R) 123 min. Side 3 CAV. \$69.98. FoxVideo.

Barton Fink

1991. John Turturro, John Goodman, Judy Davis; wr./dir. Joel and Ethan Coen. Hi-fi surround, cc. (R) 116 min. \$39.98. Fox-Video.

The Beguiled

1970. Clint Eastwood, Geraldine Page; dir. Donald Siegel. Wounded Yankee soldier (yes, Eastwood) recuperates at girls' school, sparking jealousy and more than a spot of trouble. Digital mono. (R) \$34.98. MCA/Universal.

Black Rain

1988. B&W. Yoshiko Tanaka, Kazuo

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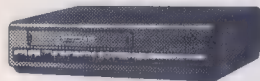
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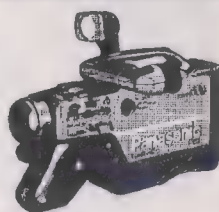
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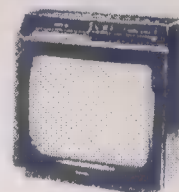
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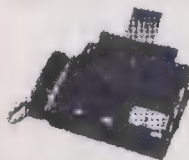


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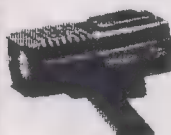
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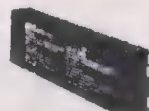
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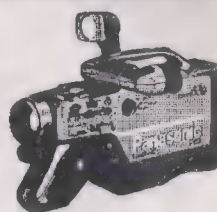
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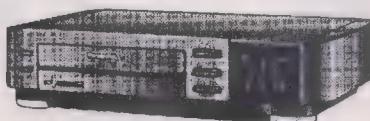
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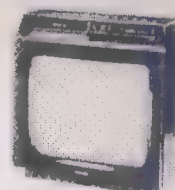
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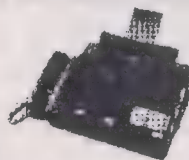


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HOME THEATER

continued from page 39

Sometimes this leads to client discussions that sound like a cross between a job interview and a therapy session. "Do they want a comfortable, cozy-in-my-slippers, fireplace-around-the-corner type of room? Or a family room with the performance aspects of a home theater?" muses Russ Herschelman, head of R. Herschelman Designs, a system design firm based in Marin County, California. "For a lot of my clients, a home theater becomes a fantasy room. By the time they're done, they're back in their childhoods."

On the other hand, adds Herschelman, "a lot of people who come to me and say they want a home theater really want a media room with a big TV to watch sports."

The choice, say most installers, remains with the customer. Performance considerations aside, there is no right or wrong way to create a home theater. Decisions about esthetics and the price of satisfying different tastes remain with the buyer. However, what many install-

ers won't do, at least at first, is talk money. "I'll propose a system that offers the best solution for their environment," explains Steyer. "If I don't do this, then I'm taking choices away from the customer." And if his solution would blow any chance of the customer's children ever attending college? "The budget can be rewritten," says Steyer. "Scaling down is the customer's decision, not mine."

A good installer, in fact, should be able to suggest compromises that limit cost overruns without sacrificing performance or esthetics. "I had a customer who wanted marble sconces," recalls Herschelman. "I was able to sell him on faux marble at \$350 each, instead of real marble for \$3,500."

In essence, you want someone who can interpret unarticulated desires, create solutions, anticipate problems and deliver a quality job on time and budget. But identifying installers who can deliver all this is tricky. Even installers agree. "Finding someone like me is hard—I'm faceless," says Bardagjy, a partner in Wagner Group Technology, a design/installation firm whose work ranges from home theaters to computer networks. "How does someone find me? I work on almost 100 percent referrals."

But even referrals from friends should be taken with a grain of salt, says Steyer. "The least perfect resources are friends and neighbors. You're asking advice from someone who's had just one experience. And most people who spend a lot of money don't want to admit they didn't get their money's worth."

What are the alternatives? For a start, if you've used a contractor for other home improvements, ask for a recommendation. Home improvement contractors often work with home theater installers on the same house at the same time, so they know who does good work. In addition, the Custom Electronic Design & Installation Association (1-800-CEDIA30) maintains a list of member installers, all of whom have been in business for at least two years. And some of the better electronics retailers also have custom installation departments.

Once you've found a few names, there are basic questions to help you select the best candidate; for example:

- Is the installer licensed to perform home renovations? Many home theaters require more than running a few wires. Does the installer have his own crew? Does he work with other contractors in your area? If so, what are their qualifications? After all, if a wall needs to be opened, plumbing, home wiring and beams may be exposed. Is the installer insured? If there is a mishap, which is unlikely but possible, the installer had better be able to pay for the repairs.

- What guarantees does the installer offer? If the work is not completed to your satisfaction, is he willing to make necessary changes? To refund part of the cost? Will he provide a full written proposal detailing a schedule, a budget and the components that will be installed? If you're not careful, you can find yourself facing "last-minute substitutions because the installer never had the equipment he said he had in the first place," warns one installer, frustrated from competing against "phantom" bids. "It's really just another kind of bait and switch."

- How long has the installer been in business and what types of projects has he completed? The years someone's been in business by itself guarantees nothing, but it helps you eliminate fly-by-night operations. And an installer who's completed projects similar to yours should be able to provide references. "It's always easy to set up the perfect showroom," notes Steyer. "It's always better to see an installation."

- Will the installer visit your house to look over the space as a first interview? "I would be leery of someone who won't," says one installer. "I would like to see the installer show at least that much interest. He has to be someone who can understand your needs, someone you can work with over several months, or more depending on the job."

If your home theater is to be built as part of a larger renovation, or as the home itself is being constructed, advance planning can save you and your installer much aggravation. "I have a client who's renovating his house and putting in a home theater at the same time," says Bardagjy. "He called me yesterday to say all my wiring has to be in next week. I only received blueprints this Monday. I'm drawing the blueprints for the home theater and developing the numbers as I go along. In five years, this guy is going to wish he had done something else instead."

Planning, which is one of the reasons for hiring an installer, also makes changes easier and less costly. "You have to accept that many customers will want to make changes, even just to upgrade their systems as time goes by," says Bardagjy. "But the difference in cost between installing everything conceivable up front or piece by piece is marginal—if it's been planned for."

What you ask for when you start a home theater project isn't always what you're willing to live with forever once the job is done. In David Witt's case, not even the addition of surround-sound speakers and electronics will fully resolve the nagging urge he feels. "If I had to do it over again," he admits, "I'd probably go with a bigger screen." ■

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Circle 40 on Reader Service Card.

ALL IN A WALL

continued from page 47

near the center speaker and made the NHT speaker openings slightly larger than their WallVision grille covers. A small fan, set to blow air out of the enclosure, provides extra insurance.

The Philips TV set comes with a universal remote, but Taylor recommended using separate remotes for the video and audio systems. Combining the two systems is simply a matter of turning the TV on and going into Aux. 1 and Audio mode. "I find universal remotes hard to read," says Taylor. "And if you're in a dark room at night, watching TV, you don't want too many buttons." ■

CEDIA

The Custom Electronic Design & Installation Association is a nationwide non-profit trade organization made up of companies that specialize in installing electronic entertainment, automation, security and communication systems in the home. CEDIA may be contacted by telephoning 1-800-CEDIA30 or by writing: CEDIA, 10400 Roberts Road, Palos Hills, IL 60465.

MOVIE PALACE

continued from page 39

displays, a motorized velvet curtain—even a refreshment stand (complete with popcorn machine).

The system's secret is that it's modular. The columns and capitals, sconces, bases, decorations and the rest are relatively light and easy to assemble. Offered in eight styles and 10 sizes, any of the interiors can be installed in a remarkably short time. While red, black and gold constitute the basic color scheme, Dream Palace's system also can be ordered to match other decorating requirements. Theatre Design Associates works through professional installers, who are required to have a demonstration room available. For nearby dealers, call 718-398-3874.

—Stan Pinkwas

Q&A

continued from page 34

Q I recently bought a Sony 8mm camcorder to replace a Canon that was stolen. The thief overlooked the accessories, including several Canon batteries. They're the same voltage as the Sonys, but not the same shape. Is there an adapter I can buy that will let me use them on the Sony?

B. Sampson
Washington, D.C.

A The six-volt battery is rapidly becoming the standard for 8mm and VHS-C camcorders. Unfortunately, batteries come in many shapes. I've heard of an adapter that converts Canon batteries to the Sony pin placement, but as far as I know, it's not imported in the U.S.

Q For the ultimate compatibility, I need to buy two identical VHS hi-fi VCRs, so I can dub from one to the other. What models allows me to control two machines independently from one remote? Why don't all VCRs offer this sort of A/B switch?

Jeffrey Anghel
Plantation, Florida

A Sony pioneered this feature, which first appeared on its SL-HF900 Beta VCR in 1985. The trend now extends through its VHS and 8mm lines, creating a triple A/B/C remote capability. Other VHS brands offering dual-frequency remotes for two decks include JVC, Mitsubishi, Hitachi and Panasonic.

Important as this is for remote editing, you should also consider features such as a flying erase head, synchro edit jacks and a full-load transport with a real-time counter, all of which will make your editing go more smoothly.

Q I'm buying an ED Beta VCR, but the longest metal particle tape available is the two-hour L-500 cassette. I don't want to use the BIII speed for quality reasons. Is there an L-750 tape for Betacam SP that I could use instead? How about using an S-VHS tape in a Beta shell? Is this tape metal particle? Would using it cause problems?

Stephen Lerner
Salt Lake City, Utah

A There are L-750 equivalents you can use, but they're marked as 30-minute tapes, since Betacam SP consumes 12 centimeters of tape per second, compared to two centimeters for ED

Beta. You'll find 30-minute Betacam tapes at industrial video dealers, but at \$20 or more, they're not cheap. S-VHS tape is not metal particle, so putting it in a Beta shell would be a waste of time, even though you could record on it.

All things considered, why not just get an S-VHS deck instead? Picture quality is comparable (especially on the industrial models), tape is widely available and prices on S-VHS tapes are finally coming down. In New York, you can find them for \$8.

Q I'm currently storing videos on VHS tapes at the EP speed, and my tape collection takes up a lot of space. I recently saw 8mm tape for the first time, and was surprised by its small size. How do these tapes (both standard and Hi8) compare at their EP speed with standard VHS in terms of video and audio quality, horizontal resolution, color accuracy and signal retention? Also, has there been any effort made to extend the frequency response of PCM audio?

Anthony Aldridge
Forest Hills, New York

A Since you can store about four 8mm tapes in the space of one VHS tape, 8mm sounds like an attractive option for archiving. But while LP picture quality with standard 8mm is about the same as VHS EP (there is no EP speed in 8mm), you're limited to only four hours per cassette. When you consider that good 120-minute VHS tapes can be found for \$3 each, but equivalent 8mm tapes seldom dip below \$5, VHS becomes a more cost-effective medium for archiving. Higher picture quality is available if you record in Hi8 at LP, but Hi8 tapes usually cost \$10 and up.

Consider also that if you intend to transfer your existing library of VHS tapes to 8mm, you've got a big job ahead of you, and will lose picture quality in the process. Finally, Sony is the only company that offers table-model 8mm VCRs, which are the only 8mm machines that record in LP (8mm camcorders record only in SP). There is a far wider selection of VCRs in VHS and S-VHS than in 8mm, and many carry features not found on any current 8mm deck.

Japanese manufacturers recently agreed on a standard for 16-bit Hi8 PCM digital audio, which would allow CD-quality recording far superior to what's possible with the current eight-bit system. However, no VCRs or camcorders use the standard yet. We may see this capability in Sony's next consumer Hi8 VCR. ■



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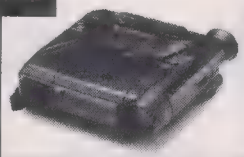
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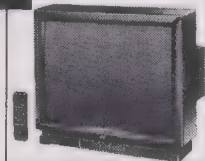
8mm Fuzzy Logic Camcorder
6 power zoom, autofocus,
4 lux, real time counter.
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| Canon 8mm | \$758 |
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| Panasonic VHS | \$699 |
| Full size VHS, 8:1 zoom, digital auto tracking, 2 lux | |
| JVC VHS-C | \$619 |
| mini compact, 1 lux, auto focus | |
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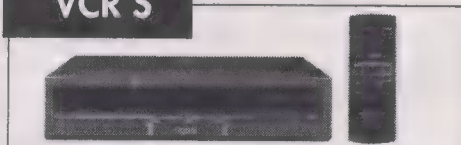
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MTS Stereo, S-VHS
input, channel scan,
sleep timer
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|---|----------------|
| Sony KV27TS31 | \$599 |
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| JVC 26" Stereo | \$449 |
| MTS stereo, S-VHS input, channel guard, sleep timer | |
| Hitachi 13" | Call |
| 181 channel, timer off last channel recall | |
| Toshiba 30" Stereo | Special |
| Picture-in-Picture | |
| Sony 20" Stereo | \$359 |
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| 25" Monitor | \$299 |
| Channel search, remote | |
| JVC AV2081s | \$349 |
| 20" stereo remote | |
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VCR'S

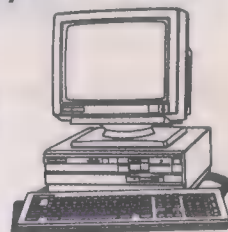


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| JVC HRDX40U | \$254 |
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| Panasonic PV-4160 | \$319 |
| VHS Hi-Fi, quick play, memory rewind off | |
| Quasar VHS | \$199 |
| On screen program, auto tracking | |
| Panasonic PV-4164 | \$377 |
| S-VHS quasi-playback, front A/V jacks | |
| 4 Head Hi-Fi | \$289 |
| 181 channel, on screen program, real time counter | |
| Fisher FVH-4903 | \$369 |
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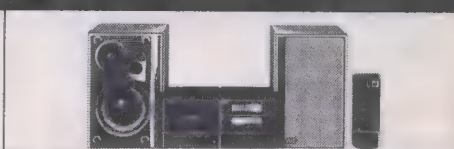
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| Sony D-303 | \$244 |
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| Panasonic KXT4200 | \$169 |
| Cordless feature phone with answering machine | |
| Sony MDR-V6 | \$69 |
| Digital headphones, closed ear, 40mm driver | |
| Whistler 3SE | \$148 |
| Compact, high sensitivity radar detector | |
| Sony WMFX-43 | \$79 |
| Digital tune Walkman, clock, alarm, Dolby B | |
| Sony SPP-75 | \$99 |
| Cordless Phone, 10 channel transmission, remote select | |

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| Yamaha YST-C11 | \$679 |
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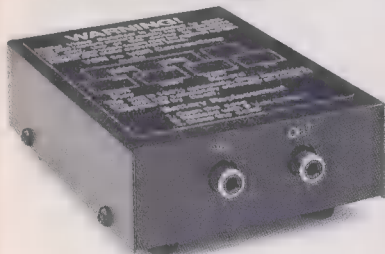
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Both the ClearImage and Video Stealth are digital, state-of-the-art, 100% guaranteed and effective. ClearImage operates on a single 9-volt battery (included) and the Video Stealth comes complete with its own A/C adapter. Both are covered by a 3 year warranty.

Warning!

Cable companies across the nation are developing copy protection schemes.

Soon, it may be impossible to video tape any program on Pay-Per-View or other premium cable channels!

In the near future, only people with the ClearImage or Video Stealth may be able to legally record programs.

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SYNTHESIS ONE

continued from page 38

more modest budgets, JBL plans to introduce two more "lower-end" Synthesis systems this year, priced at about \$13,000 and \$23,500.)

Your money buys a sharp, bright projector that can more than meet the demands of current video sources, thanks in part to Super NTSC signal processing, and enough computing power to let an installer fine-tune the system to compensate for most environmental room anomalies. About 30 dealers across the country, all trained by JBL, will carry the system.

Synthesis One also offers a dual-mode speaker system, designed to treat movies and music differently, and what it claims is the best application of the THX standard to date. The key, says JBL, is the use of horn drivers in the front and bidirectional surround speakers, rather than direct radiating drivers. Horn drivers are known for directionality and, while THX licensing director Anthony Grimaldi declines to endorse one THX system over another, he notes that "constant directionality improves sonic accuracy from room to room," leading horn systems "to give better imaging" than conventional drivers.

But horns aren't noted for their applicability to home hi-fi systems, where reflected sounds are often desired. So, in an effort to make Synthesis One all things to all people, JBL built a second set of speakers into the left and right front speaker housings. In music mode, the horn drivers are replaced by two five-inch cone drivers, a tweeter and a pair of eight-inch cone drivers above and below the horns.

At a demonstration at JBL's Northridge, California, facilities, Synthesis One appeared to deliver everything JBL claims, including exceptional soundtrack reproduction. The results in music mode were less clear, due in part to a decidedly unfriendly listening environment. But Synthesis One is first and foremost a home theater system and, at first look, a very good one. —ML

TECH TIP

Audio advice

If you don't have an external microphone and you're shooting in a noisy area, move in as close to your subjects as possible. It may make them uncomfortable, but at least they'll be heard.

COLLECTOR'S CLEARINGHOUSE

'60s Whirlybirds, '80s tennis and Space: 1999

I am interested in any performance or interview segments with the late Ronnie Van Zant or his band, Lynrd Skynyrd. I already own a few tapes about the band, but am lacking performances on video. I will gladly pay reproduction and shipping costs.

Jim LeCara
1154 Thomas Avenue
San Diego, CA 92109

I'm willing to pay expenses for these three tennis videos: 1987 Wimbledon semifinals, Becker defeats Lendl; 1988 Nabisco Masters final, Becker defeats Lendl; and 1989 Nabisco Masters final, Edberg defeats Becker.

Rashid Abdul Rahman
1274 55 Street, Apt. D2
Brooklyn, NY 11219

I'm a fan of every style of music and record all the awards shows, but I missed last year's American Music Awards. If you can get it, I'll go for it!

I'm also a big, big fan of Mariah Carey, and would like to get her appearances on *The Arsenio Hall Show*, *Saturday Night Live*, *It's Showtime at the Apollo* and *CBS This Morning*. I will reimburse for tape and postage. VHS in standard play, please.

Antonio Patiguo
Amsterdam 92-5
Col. Hip. Condesa
06100 Mexico City, D.F.

Susan Hayward appeared on *The Joey Bishop Show* in February 1968 to promote her role in *Valley of the Dolls*. If any collector has this, I'd appreciate hearing from you.

J.R. Chasse
Box 1035
Bristol, CT 06011-1035

I am a fan of the British TV series *Space: 1999*, which aired briefly on ABC in 1975 and then went into two years of syndication. Since this was before I could afford a VCR, I'm wondering if anyone recorded this show as it originally aired.

There are approximately 70 episodes, some of which are available commercially. However, these have been altered. In addition to different intro-

ductory music and credits, Sybil Daning introduces them while dressed in a hokey aluminum foil outfit. This does not do the show justice.

I'd like to find copies — preferably Beta, since these were aired before VHS was widespread — of *Space: 1999* as originally broadcast. I will also accept VHS or 8mm, and will reimburse for any postage expenses.

Peter C. Elias
Box 167294
Irving, TX 75016-7294



Screwball Scene: Claudette Colbert, pictured with Clark Gable in *It Happened One Night*, was honored at the Kennedy Center for her landmark career.

Perhaps the finest entertainment special of its kind, *The Kennedy Center Honors* has special appeal for those of us, now retired, who enjoyed these great artists during their heyday. I have taped the event since 1985, but a VCR malfunction lost my '89 show honoring Belafonte, Colbert, William Schuman, Mary Martin and Danilova.

I can copy your original and return it, or will exchange one of my tapes for a copy from you. I will also pay all expenses.

Philip L. Rose
1435 Park Street
Atlantic Beach, NY 11509

Some time in the early '80s, I saw a clip that depicted "The Twelve Days of Christmas" — literally! The actors were dressed in Victorian garb, and on the first day, the lad bought his lady a partridge in a pear tree. On the second day, he bought two turtle doves and a partridge, and on and on...

At the end of 12 days, she had acquired 12 drummers drumming, 22 pipers piping, 30 lords a-leaping, 36

ladies dancing, 40 maids (and cows!) a-milking, 42 swans a-swimming, 42 geese a-laying, 40 golden rings, 36 calling birds, 30 French hens, 22 turtle doves and 12 partridges — all in her small home.

It was a hilarious spoof, shown on independent television (Channel 9 or 11 in New York), and I would love to get my hands on a copy.

Wayne Osborne Jr.
Box 347
East Orange, NJ 07019

I'd do almost anything to get my hands on some videos of *The Whirlybirds*, a '60s TV show about a couple of guys who flew around in helicopters doing good deeds and saving people. Another popular show of the late '50s and early '60s I am looking for is the more well-known *Highway Patrol*, starring Broderick Crawford. Send any info you have.

Richard A. Lembree
c/o Harbour Lights Communications
Box 207
Kennebunkport, ME 04046-0207

Woodstock was well-documented, but an earlier gathering of 200,000 people seems to have been overshadowed and forgotten. I am looking for audio/video footage of the rock festival at Devonshire Downs in the San Fernando Valley, California, from June 15-17, 1969.

I will reimburse expenses or trade copies. Your tape will be returned within 72 hours of receipt, if requested.

R. Bruce Austin
Box 15052
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406-5052

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REQUIREMENTS:

Payment must accompany advertisement. We accept checks, money orders and Mastercard/Visa. Advertisement and payment must be received by the 25th of the third month preceding the cover date. (i.e. For insertion in VIDEO Magazine's February 1991 issue, advertisement and payment must be received by November 27th). If the closing date falls on a weekend or holiday, the issues closes on the next business day. NOTE: ADVERTISERS USING A P.O. BOX NUMBER MUST INCLUDE PERMANENT STREET ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER AND CONTACT PERSON'S NAME FOR VIDEO MAGAZINE'S RECORDS. ADVERTISEMENTS RECEIVED WITHOUT THIS INFORMATION WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

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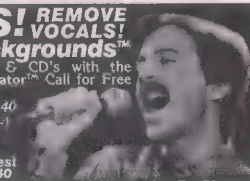
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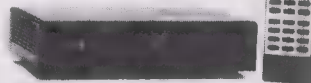
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ACCESSORIES

continued from page 43

Azden's \$250 WMS-Pro system features two mics and a monitor earphone, and Shure's L series (\$445-\$530) offers a choice of the company's industry-standard handheld or headset microphones.

For situations when a wireless system isn't necessary, a good wired mic will do the job. JVC's MZ 707 microphone, for \$200, can be used in either a stereo or super-narrow pattern for highly directional pickup. Azden's \$100 shoe-mounted ECZ-660 also offers this zoomable pickup pattern. AKG's \$60 D-79M is a durable cardioid (unidirectional) mic, and Crown's \$99 Sound Grabber is an effective pressure-zone mic (PZM) which, when properly placed, picks up clear sound in a 360-degree pattern.

Once the sound has been captured by one or more external microphones, it's the mic mixer's job to blend everything together. A mic mixer accepts multiple audio inputs and routes a mixed stereo or mono feed to the camcorder. Possibilities range from simple camcorder attachments to elaborate pro units, so you should get a mixer that matches the quality of your mics. Ambico's \$99 V-0630 is a shoe-mounted mixer featuring a headset microphone and an input for a second mic. Azden offers the \$60 Cam-3, which features three mic inputs and a passive electronic design that doesn't require batteries. The \$69 Nady MCM 400 mixer is designed to mate with the company's wireless miking systems, and the \$520 Shure M267 features a limiter, which prevents signal overload and audible distortion.

None of these accessories guarantees a polished video production, but they can make a dramatic improvement. Once they've helped to steady the camera, expand the lens perspective, adequately light the scenes and clarify the sound, all that remains is to find subject material worthy of these newfound production values.

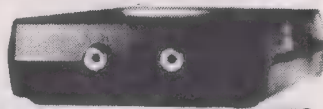
TECH TIPS

Foggy F/X

You can add a foggy effect to your videos even if you don't own a fog filter. Any ladies' white nylon stocking will do the trick. Simply stretch the stocking over the front of the lens and tightly fasten it to the camcorder with a rubber band.

James Orłowski
State College, Pennsylvania

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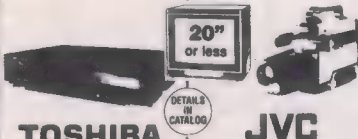
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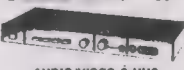
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Are you better off now than you were a year ago—speaking, that is, as a videophile? Back in December 1990, our first survey about the infuriating side of home video (“Readers on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown”) drew a deluge of complaints, which we reported last April, about dozens of video-related problems.

Did anyone listen? We think so. Two of your chief complaints were over cable TV prices and service. Now, cable regulation is one of the hottest issues facing the Congress.

The editors of *Video Magazine* want to hear again about what drives you crazy, and have prepared a fresh bill of particulars: 50 gripes drawn from the day-to-day experiences of video buffs. To add your voice to the survey, simply check each item that has the power to unmake your day (multiple grievances are acceptable). Then send the completed page, or a photocopy, to Drives Me Crazy, *Video Magazine*, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001. We’ll report the results in a future issue.

- ☐ Accidental video erasures
- ☐ Ads on movie tapes
- ☐ Amateur disaster videos
- ☐ Bad TV reception
- ☐ Blinking VCR clocks
- ☐ Cable TV picture quality
- ☐ Cable TV prices
- ☐ Cable TV service
- ☐ “Call for price” camcorder ads
- ☐ Colorization
- ☐ Confusing blank tape grades
- ☐ Confusing instruction manuals
- ☐ Couch potatoes
- ☐ Damaged rental tapes
- ☐ EP-speed movie tapes
- ☐ Foreign films dubbed badly
- ☐ Foreign films with illegible subtitles
- ☐ Format snobs: Beta, VHS, 8mm, laserdiscs, etc.
- ☐ Gray-market goods with

foreign-language instructions

- ☐ Hard-to-reach controls
- ☐ Hard-to-use controls
- ☐ HDTV



- ☐ Home-editing snafus
- ☐ Home-shopping networks
- ☐ Home theaters

- ☐ Leased-time programs
- ☐ Letterboxed movies
- ☐ Losing track of what's on which tape
- ☐ Macrovision
- ☐ MPAA ratings
- ☐ Nerds who know everything
- ☐ Onscreen instructions
- ☐ Other people's home videos
- ☐ Pan-and-scan movies
- ☐ Pay-per-view movies
- ☐ Pay-per-view sporting events
- ☐ Pornographic movies
- ☐ Remote control clutter
- ☐ Replacing a lost remote
- ☐ Rental stores that close early
- ☐ R-rated versions of X-rated films
- ☐ Rewind fines
- ☐ Satellite dishes on front lawns
- ☐ Setting the program timer
- ☐ Shopping for equipment
- ☐ Too many wires
- ☐ Video-obsessed husband, wife or significant other
- ☐ Useless bells and whistles
- ☐ Wiring problems
- ☐ Would-be censors
- ☐ Other _____

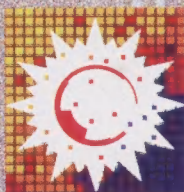
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